



THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION
DEVOTED TO BORDER HISTORY

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 35.

Price, Five Cents.



BUFFALO BILL DASHED AWAY UPON HIS MISSION OF DEATH, LEAVING ALL BEHIND GAZING AFTER HIM AND WISHING HIM SUCCESS.—(CHAPTER CLXIX.)



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BUFFALO BILL'S VICTORIES.

By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

CHAPTER CLXIX.

BUFFALO BILL'S DEADLY TRAIL.

"Cody, I wish you to help me in a difficult matter."

"In any way that I can do so, General Carr, command me," promptly answered Buffalo Bill.

"It is a deadly trail to send a man on, one of desperate danger, great hardships, and with the chances all against you—one in a hundred that you are successful or do not lose your scalp."

"I'll take that one chance, general, for I am at your service, sir. I put my life in the balance when I became an army scout."

"Yes, and a charmed life it is, for you seem death-proof, and you are the only man I would trust on this mission."

"I am ready, sir, if there is a grave at the end of the trail."

"It is because you always escape that I believe you now can do so. But you remember Surgeon Valdon?"

"I will never forget him, sir, for his skill saved me from death in an attack of fever, and my mother could not have nursed me more tenderly; but has aught been heard of him, sir?"

"No, and you remember that he left the fort over a year ago to go to the Indian village and cure them, while they were dying by dozens with smallpox?"

"Yes, sir; he hoped to bring peace between them and the whites by playing the Good Samaritan act, but I guess they killed him, though I never have been able to bring myself to believe it for sure."

"Nor can I believe Valdon dead—it does not seem right that he should be, for he was such a splendid fellow."

"He entered the army temporarily only as a surgeon, you know, and there was none better, but he could have commanded a regiment just as well, and he was a good scout, utterly fearless, and that is all we knew of him."

"He explained his plan to me to go alone to the Indian village, and by breaking up the scourge of smallpox to try to win them to a lasting peace, and I am sorry to say that he talked me into allowing him to go, I fear, to his death."

"Whether dead or alive, no one knows, and I wish you to find out—will you do so?"

"I will, sir."

"Then I shall rest content until you return and make your report."

"I shall endeavor to make it thorough, sir."

"But it is to go into a country with which you are not acquainted and invade an Indian region full of hostiles."

"I have been through that country, sir, though I

am not very familiar with it, and I have fought the Comanches, and hard fighters they are."

"Yes, indeed, but there is another thing."

"Yes, sir?"

"The reports to me from that region have been that a strange white man lives up in the Indian country, unmolested by them, and Colonel Monette seems assured that he must be a renegade, certainly a friend to the Comanches, or he could not live where he does."

"Can it be, sir, that the man is Dr. Valdon?"

"I have wondered if it was; but you can find out, so take your time about it, and if Valdon has turned renegade I believe you are the man to find out and bring him to book."

"I will try, sir."

"There is no hurry, you know; but I will give you a letter to Colonel Monette, who commands the chain of those forts bordering on the Comanche country and he will aid you, allowing you all the scouts or soldiers you may need."

"I prefer to play a lone hand, if I can, sir, but I will seek help if I need it; but one man can go where a dozen or more cannot."

"Yes, I know that that is your style, Cody; but, believe me, I hesitate to ask you to go upon this dangerous mission into a country almost unknown to you."

"A scout is like an Indian, sir—at home in any country, if he knows his business."

"Which you do, for there is not your equal in the Wild West," answered General Carr, and turning to his desk he took from it several maps, which he turned over to Buffalo Bill to study, as they were of the part of the country which he was to invade.

Leaving headquarters, Buffalo Bill went to his cabin home, and began to prepare for his dangerous trail by getting together all that he should need.

He procured a good pack animal for his supplies, camping outfit and extra ammunition, and took good care that his own horse should be in the best of condition.

Three days after he bade farewell to General Carr, who said earnestly:

"Take good care of yourself, Cody, for if harm befalls you I shall not forgive myself; but I will add to what I have told you that it has been reported recently to me from the southwestern commanders that this lone dweller, a white man, on the border of the Indian country, is in league with the Mexican bandits who cross the Rio Grande to raid the ranch country, and is as well the ally of the Comanches.

"If so, should it be even Dr. Valdon, he must hang for it."

"I understand, sir, and I shall bring you a correct report—if I live," and the scout rode away upon his mission."

It was just two weeks after that Buffalo Bill was

riding slowly along the Comanche country, his pack-animal faithfully following, when he came upon fresh Indian trails.

He stopped and examined them carefully, and, continuing upon his way, soon came upon other fresh trails.

"Comanches are about and in force—what, another? Why, I am in a whole nest of them, it seems—no, this is a trail of shod horses, and a small force to be here in the Indian country. I will follow on after them and see if they know that they are in danger."

Thus saying, the scout urged his horses on at a gallop.

He saw other Indian trails, and in an hour's time came in sight of a party of cavalry ahead.

"Not a full troop, and their horses are worn down from the pace they go—ah, there are ladies along, as I live, and I don't like the looks of things," and Buffalo Bill rode along until suddenly he was discovered, and a halt was made until he came up.

In addition to the cavalymen and their two officers, Buffalo Bill saw a man with iron-gray hair, and the "eagles" on the shoulder-straps of his fatigue uniform indicated his rank as a colonel.

With him were two ladies, one a handsome woman of thirty, the other a girl under twenty, and a young officer, evidently an aide.

"Well, my man, are you from any of the forts, and have you despatches for me. I am Colonel Martin Monette, the commandant of this military district—and you are unknown to me."

"I am a scout, sir, from the Northwest, and my name is Cody, while I have a letter to you from General Carr."

"Then you are Buffalo Bill, the great scout—I am glad to meet you, indeed, and——"

"Pardon me, Colonel Monette, where are your scouts, sir?"

"Off scouting, for they were anxious to see if there were Indians around."

"Why, sir, you are surrounded by Indians," vehemently said Buffalo Bill.

"What, do you mean it?"

"A blind man could see that, sir, for I have run on no less than five different and distinct trails, all fresh, within the past half-dozen miles.

"You have not noticed them, but the Indians are certainly watching you."

"And my scouts?" anxiously asked Colonel Monette.

"Have been captured, killed or cut off, and unable to return to you."

"This looks bad, indeed, but we are fortunate in having with us the greatest of scouts, and though you are new to this country, Cody, I place ourselves in your hands, so what is to be done, for my men are soldiers, not scouts?"

Buffalo Bill had taken a letter from his pocket and handed it to the colonel, who said:

"Yes, from General Carr; but I'll read it later; but what is to be done now?"

"I see but one thing, sir, and that is to get into camp and fortify.

"A mile back I found a hill which is the very place, and, as you have ladies along, they must be made safe, so if you will return there I will ride on to the fort for a large force to come to your aid.

"The Indians are doubtless in ambush ahead for you and will not expect you to turn back, and you cannot make good time with horses tired out, as yours are.

"My horse, though at the end of a long trail, can stand a hard run, and once before I have been over this trail, so know it."

"But you may be ambushed, also?"

"I'll look out for that, sir, and I do not think there is a moment to be lost.

"I'll leave my pack animal until my return," and Buffalo Bill was about to dash away, when he continued:

"Will you give me a line to your officer in command, sir, as I am unknown at the fort?"

"True," and Colonel Monette hastily wrote a line, and, taking it with a salute, Buffalo Bill dashed away upon his gantlet of death, leaving all behind gazing after him and praying for his success; but the colonel took no time to make explanations, but ordered the command to make for the little hilltop, and they went at a gallop.

Then he held a short conversation with Captain Silver and Lieutenant Coleman, and they at once set to work with a will, for the safest place was selected for the ladies and fortified with trees cut down and the pack-saddles.

The men were placed in position of defense, the horses stretched around in a circle, to be sacrificed, if need be, to make the position stronger by using them as a breastwork if they found it necessary to kill them for that purpose.

In half-an-hour of time the little fort presented a very warlike appearance, though not yet had an Indian been seen.

Buffalo Bill had disappeared in the distance, still riding like the wind, and Marcia Monette, who was on watch while the men worked, suddenly called out:

"There is a horseman coming along on our trail at full speed."

CHAPTER CLXX.

THE INDIAN COURIER.

The words of Marcia brought her father quickly to her side, and he beheld a horseman coming swiftly along their trail.

He was following it, with no eye apparently ahead, or on either flank, only upon the trail.

As he drew nearer the little hill, he seemed to move a little more cautiously, and to be glancing ahead.

With his glass to his eye, Colonel Monette said:

"It is an Indian, and he is riding with considerable speed, and beyond doubt is following our trail for some purpose.

"Buffalo Bill was right, and that fellow is evidently on the watch of our movements to report to comrades near.

"We can catch him, I believe."

With this the colonel called to the men, who rapidly took in the situation and ran on foot to points of advantage which would bring the Indian within easy range if he came on to where the trail turned off to come on to the hill.

Unseen by the redskin, they got into position, and then lay in wait for him, while he was yet a mile away, for when first seen by Marcia he had been all of four miles distant.

The colonel had told them to bring down his horse with a shot and not to hurt the rider, and three of the freshest animals in the lot were ready, with riders by their sides, to dash out and run him down the minute he was dismounted.

Nearer and nearer came the redskin horseman, until presently he halted just where the troopers' trail branched off to come up the hill.

As he raised his eyes to glance at the hill, where not a soul was visible in the thick growth of pines, a puff of smoke burst forth from the knoll, and the Indian's horse dropped dead.

The rider went down with him, but quick as a flash he had thrown himself behind the body of his horse for shelter.

At the same moment the three men sprung to their feet and rushed toward him, while the ready horsemen dashed out from the timber at full speed.

Thus caught, and not knowing that his life was to be spared, the Indian sprung to his feet and raised his hands above his head, one of them holding up a large snow-white feather.

As the men advanced upon him, he called out:

"Don't kill. Red Wing is friend."

The soldiers at once surrounded the Indian, who was a tall, finely-formed young brave, his face showing no fear, in spite of the ordeal through which he was passing.

"Well, Comanche, we want you," said one of the men in the Comanche tongue.

"Red Wing want to see big white chief," was the reply in English.

"Yes, and the big white chief wants to see you; so come along," and the redskin was led up the hill and taken before Colonel Monette, where he stood,

with his daughter, Mrs. Silver, the captain and Lieutenant Coleman.

"You did not hurt him, corporal?"

"Oh, no, sir; but he speaks English and says he wants to see you."

"You big chief?" asked the Indian, calmly, surveying the colonel.

"Yes, I am the chief, and you are a Comanche brave."

"Me Red Wing—not chief yet, but hope to be big chief some day."

"See this!" and the Indian held out for observation a ring.

"The Lone Medicine Man tell Red Wing come to big chief, show him this ring and tell him with straight tongue about Indian on his trail to kill."

"Then say keep ring for him."

He looked from Mrs. Silver to Marcia, and handed to the latter the ring.

"Lone Chief have heap sense; he good man, great brave, mighty medicine chief."

"Don't want his people kill by Comanches, so tell Red Wing to come, catch big chief and tell him send two three good rider to fort for help, he fortify him people in strong place to wait till soldier come and drive red men off."

"Plenty Comanche brave there, there, here, here," and the Indian messenger pointed to the trail ahead, then to one side and another to show that the Indians were upon every side.

Colonel Monette's face grew serious, while Lieutenant Coleman remarked:

"I do not believe a word of this story."

"Red Wing speak with straight tongue; he know, and Lone Medicine Chief know, so tell Red Wing to come—send ring to prove no crooked tongue talk."

"And I believe you, my good Red Wing, for Buffalo Bill reported the same thing; but you must come from that very mysterious man, said to dwell in a ranch in the Indian country, and who has made some discovery of their intention to hem us in."

"I wish to talk more with you, Red Wing," and the colonel gave orders to Lieutenant Coleman to look to the work of strengthening their position.

"Now, Red Wing, tell me just what the Lone Medicine Chief, as you call him, wished you to tell me."

The Indian stooped and, taking a stick, drew a trail, which represented the one the colonel had traveled and marked the spot where they then were.

Then he continued the trail on to the fort, and afterward marked the place where the Indians were.

Three other marks were put, two of them quite near their position, the other further off, to show that there were two other bands of Indians near.

"How many?" asked the colonel.

The redskin said, as he pointed to the different marks:

"Most hundred here, more than hundred there,

two times hundred this place, and back on trail you know, plenty Comanche."

"This would indicate that, with those we have avoided, there are all of five hundred Indians around us, Silver, any one of the band being within half-a-day's call, and those between us and the fort only a few miles away."

"Yes, sir; that is as I understand it," replied the captain, while Red Wing remarked:

"Yes, that him all right."

"And where is Lone Chief now, Red Wing?"

"With Red Wing's band; medicine chief to big chief Gold Face and wounded braves, and all hurt bad."

"I see. And he got you to come on this message for him?"

"Yes, Red Wing heap love Lone Medicine Chief."

"He save Red Wing's life from bad Sioux; save his scalp two time."

"Red Wing no bad Injun to his people, no friend to palefaces, but Lone Medicine Chief tell Red Wing to save his people, the big white chief and squaws, and he come."

"If Red Wing's people see him come, they think he crooked brave, love paleface; but he do what his white brother tell him, and maybe be killed by his brother warriors."

"But if they see him come, they see white braves shoot horse and catch Red Wing, so let Comanche brave run after little while, you shoot, but no hit, and get away; have white brave run after Red Wing, but no catch, and he tell Comanche he get away."

"A clever ruse, indeed, Red Wing, and it shall be as you say."

"I will have the rifles loaded without ball, and you can ride off on one of the trooper's horses, so that it will look as though you had made your escape, and I will have your hands bound behind you to make it the more realistic."

The Indian smiled at the plan of the colonel, and seemed to be content, and then said:

"Better send riders to the fort, as Lone Medicine Chief told big chief."

The colonel was about to state that Buffalo Bill had already gone, when Marcia said quickly, in Spanish:

"Do not tell him, father, that Buffalo Bill has gone, for, of course, he will repeat it to his comrades, and it may cause them to hasten their attack, if they have not seen the scout go, for they may not have done so."

"A good suggestion, Marcia; you are, indeed, a soldier's daughter," responded the colonel in Spanish, and, turning to the Indian, he said:

"No, I'll send no riders now, for my young men are brave and can fight hard, if your people attack us."

"Comanche will come."

"I have no doubt of it, but as you have done your duty, I will reward you in a way that will not look like doing so," and the colonel ordered one of the best horses to be brought up, saddled and bridled, and fastened to it a rifle and a pair of revolvers, with a couple of fine serapes, a soldier's overcoat and some other things that might prove useful.

He also tied on a bag of provisions, a canteen of water, and put in the saddle-pocket some silver money, but took good care that no cartridges for the firearms should be given the Indian, so that he could fire back at them when he joined his comrades.

Then the horse was staked out near, and having tied the hands of Red Wing behind him, he ordered him to mount.

The redskin was as active as a cat, and leaped into the saddle in spite of his hands being bound.

"Now let the Red Wing go," said the colonel, and the horse started off, dragging the rope, with the stake on the end, after him.

The Indian gave a glance behind him, as though fearing that treachery might be shown and the rifles be loaded with ball, but when they began to fire at him and he was not hit, he seemed satisfied of the good faith of the palefaces toward him.

When he had gotten several hundred yards away, out dashed three troopers in pursuit, though they did not urge their horses to the utmost.

But the ruse was a success, for hardly had Red Wing gotten a half mile from the hill, his horse urged to its full speed, when over a rise dashed a score of mounted warriors to his rescue.

At the sight of them the three pursuers quickly came to a halt, and dashed back to cover, for there was no longer any doubt that the Indians were near in force.

CHAPTER CLXXI.

HEMMED IN.

"Silver, the scout, Cody, was right," said Colonel Monette, when he saw the Indians dash out to the rescue of Red Wing, as they supposed.

"Yes, sir; we owe a great deal to him; but I cannot understand this man's secret influence with the Indians, and how he could make a hostile deliberately plot to keep us out of the clutches of his companions," said Captain Silver.

"It is remarkable, but yet he did so."

"The Indian himself said he was our foe, and only acted to serve the Lone White Chief."

"I hope there will be no mistake about Buffalo Bill's going through, colonel."

"I have no fear for him, Silver, for Buffalo Bill is surely a man who bears a charmed life, and then his plainscraft, skill and nerve will carry him through without fail."

"Oh, yes, I look for reinforcements from the fort to-night, captain," remarked Marcia.

"I only hope that your hopes will be realized, Marcia," said Mrs. Silver, sadly.

"See, the Indian has joined his comrades, and is gesticulating wildly to them, doubtless telling of his escape," said Colonel Monette, viewing them through his glass.

After having heard his story, his comrades gave a wild yell of defiance and hate, shook their lances at their foes, and rode back over the rise from which they had ridden into view.

"Now, colonel, can I do anything more to strengthen the fort?" asked Captain Silver.

"We will make a round of our fort and see, captain," and the two officers began the round.

The hilltop was not much over an acre in size, and the summit was thickly covered with a dense growth of dwarf pines.

In the center these had all been cut down, and were brought to the outer edge and placed in position as a barrier, the branches being forced in also, and what dirt could be dug up had been thrown over all, thus forming a breastwork two feet in height.

The center of the hill was seamed with ravines, and here had been pitched the tent for the ladies in one, the camp for the men in another, so that they would be in little danger there from the bullets of the Indians.

The horses had all been ranged just back of the breastworks, awaiting their fate, for there was neither grass nor water there for them, the water in the canteens of the soldiers being the only supply on hand.

Should it be deemed necessary, then the horses would be slain and dragged up against the outer side of the works, so as to form a much better defense in weak places.

A hospital had been prepared in the ravine for the wounded, a corporal and a soldier, who had been hospital stewards, being detailed as acting surgeons.

Provisions were set out for the men, fires were built for cooking, and three hours after their arrival the stronghold was ready to receive their foes, if they came, though the work of strengthening the works still continued.

Marcia and Mrs. Silver were to have charge of the ammunition, and all were assigned to duties which would enable every man to use a rifle.

Captain Silver had charge of one side of the stronghold, Lieutenant Coleman of the other, and Colonel Monette took control over all.

The sun was just an hour high when Colonel Monette said:

"Now let them come, for we are ready for them."

Had they heard his words, the effect could not have been more electrical, for there suddenly came a cry of alarm from a dozen voices all around the

stronghold, and they beheld appear in view, as though by magic, hundreds of redskins.

They rose over the tops of ridges, out of ravines, and from rises, averaging from half-a-mile to three miles distant.

There were fully half-a-thousand of them, and the sight was appalling.

They appeared where they could, according to where the nature of the ground allowed them to be in hiding, and one and all of them were mounted.

"That is a most formidable force, lieutenant, and if Buffalo Bill has not been able to get through, we will have a desperate struggle to keep them at bay."

"Yes, sir, we will, and although that white chief appeared to serve us well, I lay it to him that he saved us then for some motive of his own, to entrap us afterward," said Lieutenant Coleman.

Gazing at the Indians through his glass, as they slowly advanced and hemmed in the stronghold. Colonel Monette said:

"As I live, there is our Indian courier, for I recognize him by the cavalry overcoat which he has put on."

"The traitor. I should like to get a shot at him, sir," muttered Lieutenant Coleman, bringing his repeating rifle to his shoulder.

"On the contrary, Mr. Coleman, he is the one I would spare, after his good service to us, for, if a traitor, it was not to us, but to his own people."

The speaker was Marcia, who had suddenly glided to the side of her father, who responded:

"Well said, my child, and I shall go the rounds ordering all the men to spare that man, for he deserves it."

"Now, Lieutenant Coleman, I will leave you, for you know my orders regarding the repelling the attack, and I will make the rounds with my young aide here," and he smilingly referred to his daughter, whose face, though pale, showed not a shadow of anxiety as to the result of the conflict.

"Father," said Marcia, as the two were walking away from the lieutenant's post of duty, "you have under your command here Captain Silver, Lieutenant Coleman, a sergeant, two corporals and twenty-four men, thirty soldiers in all."

"Yes, Marcia."

"Then there are pack-horse drivers and camp rustlers, making thirty-nine fighting men, or forty, including yourself, with Mrs. Silver, myself, my maid Ellen, with your negro servant, the last four of little use."

"Forty men can do wonders, my child, when brought to bay."

"And five hundred warriors to fight them."

"We are splendidly fortified as well; there are, with my own weapons, Silver's, Coleman's and the others, seven repeating rifles in the party, and thirty-five carbines, while the Indians are but poorly

armed, and come within our range a long way off. The ground is rough for them to ride over, and we can beat them back until Buffalo Bill arrives with help.

"We are hemmed in, Marcia, but our chances are bright to win a victory."

Marcia, after hearing her father's statement of the chances, felt much relieved, and went on the rounds with him, showing by her face that she had no dread of the result.

The soldiers saluted her as well as the colonel, and time and again she overheard the words:

"We'll be braver, comrades, for having her to defend."

Returning to Mrs. Silver, whom she loved dearly, as they had been friends several years before, when the captain's wife was a bride, for she was half-a-dozen years older than Marcia, she said:

"Now, don't be blue, Eloise, for I have been the rounds with my father and heard a plain statement of the facts."

"Our position is worth a couple of hundred men, our repeating rifles another hundred; then the carbines of the men as many more, which puts it about as though forty men were fighting three times their force of Indians, you see, for a trooper is worth three redskins any time."

Mrs. Silver laughed at Marcia's reasoning, and replied:

"You argue well for our side, Marcia, but the Indians take a different view of it."

"Wait until they are convinced."

"Yes, but precious lives must end to convince them."

"Well, soldiers, like scouts, die with their boots on, and I have no fear of the result, Eloise."

"You are a dear, true girl, Marcia, worthy to be a soldier's daughter and a soldier's wife."

"I am not as accustomed to this wild life as you are, but you may be sure I will not disgrace the colonel's daughter or my captain by showing the white feather, so depend upon me, for your bravery cheers me."

"That's right, be a man," laughed Marcia, and then she added:

"Father gave orders for no one to shoot at the Indian courier sent to us, for he has already donned the cavalry overcoat we gave him, so we can pick him out."

"Perhaps the cunning fellow put it on hoping that we would spare him."

"I had not thought of that, and he was pretty cute, wasn't he?"

Just then there came the loud, commanding voice of Colonel Monette:

"To your posts, all!"

"Stand ready to fire only under orders!"

"That means the Indians are coming, and we must

go into hiding; but I am going to see that redskin charge, and you come, too, if you will, Eloise, for I had Peter build me a lookout—come, there is room for both of us."

As Marcia spoke she led the way a few paces among the pines, to where there were two trees straighter and taller than the others, and growing only a yard apart.

From one of them to the other sticks had been tied across with lassoes, a foot or more apart, and extending some fifteen feet up from the ground, where a couple of large limbs had been put across, forming a rest for the feet.

"Come up, Eloise, in my observatory," and Marcia went readily up the crude ladder, but Mrs. Silver feared to trust herself, saying she would become dizzy.

Standing upon the two limbs, and holding to the branches of the pines, Marcia was enabled to see over the country all around for miles, her position being above the ordinary growth of timber.

"This is just grand, Eloise," she called down to Mrs. Silver, and she added:

"I will report the situation exactly."

Mrs. Silver gazed with admiration up at the brave girl, and replied:

"I must insist upon your coming down when the fight begins, Marcia, for you are in a most exposed position."

"No, indeed, for you know Indians are dead shots, never fire at random, and their arrows would never come up here, while their bullets will be directed at the soldiers, you know."

"Well, I will stay here as long as you do there, Marcia, so if your argument holds good, I'll be the one most in danger, the shots falling here."

"Eloise, I'll come the moment I think you are in any danger," and Marcia turned and glanced about her.

The scene was a thrilling one, and appalling as well, for five hundred warriors were in view in a glance of her eyes around a circle.

Those nearer the hill when first seen, had held their position until those further off had advanced, until all were at an equal distance, a third of a mile away.

They were a most formidable looking army, and Marcia's glass revealed their painted faces, gorgeous feathers, gayly-caparisoned ponies, bright serapes and long lances.

As she looked, she suddenly cried:

"Oh, Eloise, they are coming!"

With her words came a wild chorus of yells, and then the thundering of hoofs, as the redskins came on in a mighty charge.

CHAPTER CLXXII.

ON TIME.

Mrs Silver covered her face with her hands as if to shut out the scene which Marcia beheld, and yet in her ears rang yells infernal, as though all the demons in hades had broken out and were rushing over the earth.

The thunder of the hoofs on the hard ground, the snorting of the ponies, and the yells of the red riders, made up, indeed, an appalling situation, and Marcia gazed upon the scene spellbound with awe.

It far surpassed her wildest expectations of what it would be.

She heard no answering voice or shot from the soldiers, for the Indians who had rifles fired a few shots as they came on, and the others sent a shower of arrows toward the hilltop.

But the bullets and arrows fell short, and as the charging red men neared the foot of the hill, they found what they had evidently not counted upon, that the nature of the ground caused them to check their speed.

The wash of waters from the hill, in the rainy season, had worn ravines and gutters that could not be run over at full speed, and though here and there were smooth places, and some kept up their speed, most of the braves had to draw rein.

Some of the ponies stumbled and fell, others came down on top of them, and in that way half-a-dozen groups of dismounted warriors were seen, many of them and their horses seriously hurt by their fall.

It was at this moment that Colonel Monette's voice was heard commanding:

"Men, aim at those who have avoided the ravines, and throw no shot away!"

"Fire!"

There followed the crash of nearly two score rifles fired in a circle, and it seemed that every bullet found its mark in horse or rider.

"Repeating rifles, now, and carbines fire at will," cried Colonel Monette, raising his own repeating rifle.

The others who had repeating rifles fired with the colonel, and the weapons rattled out merry, but deadly music, and by the time they were empty, the carbines began to open again.

The first volley had checked the charging Indians momentarily, the repeating rifles had puzzled them, and the carbines opening so quickly again had made them waver wildly under the galling fire.

Then the repeating rifles began again, while Colonel Monette called out:

"Half of you load, and the other half use your revolvers."

Sharply and rapidly the revolvers rattled, and the Indians now being within range of them, they did their deadly work until the troopers who had loaded

their carbines again began to open fire, when, with terrific yells, the mass of brutes and savage humanity rolled back like a wave from the beach, after firing one vicious volley at their foes, and fled to a distance for shelter from that merciless hail of leaden messengers, those who had the long range repeating rifles pouring in their shots as long as a shot would tell.

In their retreat, the Indians endeavored to carry off their wounded and dead, but the fire was so hot that they had to give it up, and when they had fled for safety, there lay upon the fields encircling the hills, scores of dead and wounded ponies, half of which had lost a rider.

Spellbound at the sight, forgetting herself, danger and all, Marcia had stood on her lookout viewing the scene, while at the foot of the tree Mrs. Silver had sunk down upon her knees, praying for the safety of those who were to beat back that red horde of savages.

Bullets had rattled near Marcia, one clipping a pine tree near her, and an arrow had caught in her skirt and hung there, yet she heeded them not in her admiration for the scene.

When she saw the Indians stagger, sway backward and fly, she gave a loud cry of triumph, waved her slouch cavalry hat, and called out, as she seemed to realize now where she was and what that defeat meant:

"Ah, Eloise, they are driven back!

"The redskins are flying!

"But how bravely they fought, for many fell, and—and—but what has been the cost to us?"

The color fled quickly from her face, leaving it very pale, and rapidly she descended the ladder of limbs and sticks to where Eloise Silver stood.

"I dare not ask, Marcia," she whispered.

"Come, we must know, and at once.

"They may need us," and Marcia took Mrs. Silver by the hand and led the way quickly to the breast-works.

A glad cry escaped her lips as she beheld her father, who said quickly:

"Your husband is safe, Mrs. Silver; but Lieutenant Coleman is wounded, and we have lost some of our brave men.

"I will come to you soon, for the redskins are beaten back for the present."

"Beaten back for the present," repeated Mrs. Silver, as she went with Marcia to the ravine where the wounded were to be taken.

"Lieutenant Coleman, I am deeply pained to see you wounded," said Marcia, as the young officer was seen, supported by two of the men.

"It is nothing serious, Miss Monette, only a flesh wound, though I am weak from the bleeding, which now, fortunately, is checked. I'll be all ready for

the next charge," said the plucky officer, as he dropped upon the blanket spread for him.

The wound was in his left shoulder, but the corporal, acting as surgeon, had extracted the bullet and checked the flow of blood.

He then quickly dressed the wound and turned to several wounded soldiers who had been brought in, mostly hurt with arrows.

"Our loss is three killed, Lieutenant Coleman and seven men wounded, fortunately none of them seriously, while in return we gave the redskins a very severe lesson," said Colonel Monette, as he came up the ravine.

"It was a glorious victory, father, but can we do nothing for the wounded Indians?"

"No, nothing, Marcia, for did we leave the works they would charge again upon us.

"We had a dozen horses also killed, and others wounded, and the latter ordered killed, so all will be dragged upon the works to strengthen them; but Mr. Coleman, I wish to congratulate you that your wound is no worse, and to compliment you upon your conspicuous bravery to-day.

"Your husband, also, Mrs. Silver, won the highest praise, though he escaped a wound, and, in fact, every man behaved nobly."

"It was a grand fight, father; I never believed such a scene possible as the one I witnessed!"

"You witnessed?"

"Yes, sir, I was up a tree, so to speak, and saw it all," and Marcia led her father to her lookout.

"I forbid your doing such a foolhardy thing again, my child, for when we risked our lives to defend ourselves and comrades, yes, and you and Eloise, you deliberately risked your life for what I can only look upon as idle curiosity; and, why, here is an arrow now hanging in your dress! Oh, Marcia! what have you not escaped?" and the voice of the strong man trembled.

"I'll not do so again, father, only—only—I did wish to see it all, and I was not a bit afraid," meekly said Marcia.

"I'll vouch for that, for she stood nobly at her post, colonel—but here comes Selden, another one to scold you, Marcia," and Mrs. Silver sprung forward to meet her husband, who called out:

"We gave them a lesson, Eloise, did we not?"

"I only hope they will profit by it, but they will not," she answered.

"Not altogether; but, colonel, did you notice how the chiefs pointed upward, as though looking over the pines?"

"It bothered me as to what they meant, and I saw them aiming there, too."

"It was at this silly child of mine, Silver, for look there!"

"Where, sir?"

"At my roost," said Marcia, meekly, and she pointed to the improvised ladder.

"That was my lookout, and now I am scolded because my woman's curiosity got the better of me; but I won't offend again, dear papa."

The captain hastily ran up the ladder and called out:

"A grand view, but a dangerous one, for there are several arrows sticking in the limbs up here, and some bullet marks as well.

"Miss Marcia, you are a plucky girl to stand here and witness that fight," and the captain's description caused the colonel to ascend to the lookout.

"It is a splendid view, and I will place two men on watch here, and let the others rest.

"But they will come upon us after nightfall, Silver."

"I feel sure of it, sir."

"We can do no more than strengthen our works all we can, distribute the ammunition, and keep the best men on watch."

"Yes, sir, the three scouts, on the outside, so as to hasten in and give us warning."

"Yes, that will be our advantage, but the work of beating them back will be harder by night than by day."

"I know how redskins hate to fight at night, and hope that this will hold good here, sir, at least until dawn."

"It will not, I fear, for they know that we are in a tight place, and not so very far from the fort; yes, they may have seen Buffalo Bill going for help, so I am sure that they will attack to-night, so we must not be caught napping," and the two officers descended from the perch, and Colonel Monette having ordered a couple of men to go up there as guards, he went with the captain to have supper with the ladies, Lieutenant Coleman also joining them, although he looked very pale, yet said he was ready for duty when the time came again.

When nightfall came, the men sent a request to Marcia to sing, and getting out her guitar, she did so for more than an hour, after which the camp became as quiet as the grave.

Thus several hours passed away, when in ran the three scouts from their different advanced posts, and reported:

"They are coming for another charge!"

At the report of the scouts, every man drew a long breath and nerved himself for the worst.

The scouts said that the Indians were coming along on foot, leading their horses to get over the rough ground where they had met disaster in the afternoon, for in the night they could not be seen, and once over, they could charge up the hill at full speed and carry the works.

Colonel Monette's first duty was to send Marcia

and Mrs. Silver to the cover of the ravine, and then make a quick circuit of the works.

Though suffering with his wound, Lieutenant Coleman was again at his post, ready to do or die, and the wounded men who were able to hold a rifle were also on hand.

A few minutes of intense silence in the darkness was broken by the loud command in Colonel Monette's voice:

"Ready, men!"

"Fire!"

There were flashes of two score shots, and instantly the rattle of the repeating rifles.

The blaze of the guns lighted up the scene, and then, all around the hill the ground was black with Indians, surprised by being discovered, staggered by the terrible fire, which cut down many in spite of the darkness, and mounting in hot haste to rush up the hill.

It was a momentary check, and this gave the troopers time to reload and fire again in a volley that also told, while as the charge began, the repeating rifles were loaded for another round.

The work was done calmly, rapidly, and the result was deadly; but the redskins were desperate in their haste and fury, and now being mounted and moving, came on with the wildest, most appalling yells.

The command then came:

"Every other man use revolvers, and the rest load your carbines!"

A cheer was the answer, and the rattle of revolvers began, and the aim was as true as could be under the circumstances.

Horses and riders went down, diabolical yells rent the air; the whirring of arrows, the whistling of bullets, for the Indians were firing now, the trampling of hoofs, snorting of steeds, cheers of the soldiers, and the red flashes of weapons made up a scene that was diabolically terrible.

Up to the barrier came the horde of savage humanity, and each man behind it nerved himself to die, for by sheer force of numbers the Indians were coming over to crush them.

But when the braves in the lead, finding that they could not force their ponies over the barricade, were throwing themselves from their saddles to climb over themselves, there came from off on the plain the ringing call of a bugle.

It rose above the mad din of the conflict, and in an instant all was silence.

What that call meant the Indians at the base of the hill knew but too well, for it was heard again, and in the moment of silence was heard the thunder of hundreds of rushing, iron-shod hoofs, and a cheer from many throats, accompanied by the clash of steel.

A wild cry of warning came up from the Indians

down upon the plain, which those almost over the barrier knew but too well, and rushing back to their horses, they leaped upon them and fled for their lives, all running in one direction, so as to keep together and present a solid front to their pursuers.

There was not a moment now to stop for dead or wounded, for the mighty roar of hoofs told them they had no small force to deal with.

With hope in their breasts, the little garrison resumed the fight, and sent a leaden hail after the retreating redskins, while Colonel Monette and Captain Silver, mounting their horses, for half the animals yet remained alive, called to a few troopers to follow them, and riding out of the barrier at a break left on purpose, they went down to join their rescuers in the pursuit.

In advance, giving his wild warcry, rode Buffalo Bill, while behind him came the commanding major with three troops of cavalry, numbering two hundred men.

It was true that the pace set for them by Buffalo Bill had caused many of them to scatter over miles of the plain, while the camp equipage on pack horses was far behind; but there were over a hundred fighting men up in the charge, and others coming on rapidly from the rear each minute.

"Ho, Buffalo Bill, my brave friend, we owe our lives to your hard riding; who is in command?" cried Colonel Monette, as the scout dashed up to where the little force from the hill stronghold met him.

"Major Canfield, sir, and we have two hundred men."

"You will need them, for the Indians are about five hundred strong, though now on the retreat; major, I am delighted to see you, for you are most welcome," and Colonel Monette grasped the major's hand, the latter replying:

"And I to see you, colonel; but Buffalo Bill deserves the credit of bringing us in time to save you."

CHAPTER CLXXIII.

BUFFALO BILL'S RIDE FOR LIFE.

The pursuit of the Indians was continued for miles, when at the crossing of a stream, where they could not cross rapidly, owing to the descent of the ford being a narrow cut in a cliff, the cavalry, under Major Canfield, had come upon them, and poured in some telling volleys with their carbines, which piled up braves and ponies by the score.

With this terrible blow, and the picking off of stragglers in their flight, added to their being driven away from their camps and losing their outfits, and the losses they had met with in charging the stronghold, not to speak of their disappointment at losing their prey, the Comanches continued their retreat to their village, a very much demoralized body of braves.

When he returned to the stronghold, Major Canfield found that he was just in time for breakfast.

He had left half his force at the river to bury the dead, and bring back his own wounded, for the troopers had not escaped scathless, and then he pressed on with Buffalo Bill as his guide, to see what loss Colonel Monette and his party had sustained, for the colonel had not continued on in the chase after the redskins, there being plenty for him to look after in his own camp.

Major Canfield was most warmly welcomed by Marcia and Mrs. Silver, and he sat down to breakfast with them with an appetite which he said would do full justice to the meal.

"We were looking for your arrival at the fort, colonel," he said, "when the lookout reported a horseman coming on like mad.

"As he neared the fort, his horse was seen to be staggering and soon after he dropped dead, but his rider landed on his feet, and came on swift as a deer.

"Reaching the fort, I met him, and he called out: 'Colonel Monette and his party are corraled by hundreds of Indians.

"Half an hour's delay in reaching them will cost them their lives—I will guide you to them, sir."

"I had never then met Buffalo Bill, and so I asked him who he was, and his reply was characteristic of the man:

"Men call me Buffalo Bill, sir; but I'll introduce myself when I have more time, as now you have not a minute to lose."

"I at once ordered three troops into the saddle, with picked horses and what food could be prepared without delay, and urged the greatest haste, especially when Buffalo Bill said that Miss Monette and Mrs. Silver were with you, and in just twenty minutes we left the fort."

"You were prompt, indeed, my dear major, and it was that which saved us; but Buffalo Bill returned with you?"

"Oh, yes, sir; he got a fresh horse, put his own saddle and bridle on him, and it was he who set the pace for us to follow.

"I had to check him time and again, for he went at a pace that has stretched my troopers over twenty miles of trail, some just now getting in, I noticed.

"But it is well that he did, for we were not one minute too soon."

"You were not, sir, for five minutes more would have ended it.

"Let me thank you again, Major Canfield, and congratulate you upon your promotion, for I believe your present rank is only a few weeks old."

"Yes sir, and my wiping out of the Mexican bandits got me the promotion, I believe. But this scout, Cody, is a wonder."

"This frontier produces some very remarkable

men, but I know of none more remarkable than Buffalo Bill, major."

As there was no water near the hill, it was decided to bury the dead at once, and push on with the wounded to a stream ten miles distant, and there camp for the night, for then the pursuers of the Indians would have returned.

This was done, and the next day the command pulled out for Fort Dare.

The little party that had been so long on a most dangerous trail, passing through hardships and perils, hopes and fears, came in sight of Fort Dare early in the afternoon of the day following their departure from what Marcia had named "Fort Forlorn Hope."

The colonel and his immediate bodyguard went on in advance, leaving Major Canfield to follow on with the wounded at a slower pace.

Buffalo Bill rode ahead as guide, calm and stern, with no trace on his handsome face of what he had passed through.

When they came near the fort, the garrison was under arms to receive them, and the huzzas they received showed how they were welcomed, for Major Canfield had sent a courier back to report just what the situation had been.

With no show of vanity, Buffalo Bill went quietly about the fort, as modest as a schoolboy, though he could not but know that every eye was upon him, that every one knew his record, and that his deeds were the talk of every one.

He had gone to the quarters of the chief of scouts at the fort, and given it out as his intention to start upon a trail as soon as he could find a couple of horses to suit him, for he intended carrying an extra animal along.

These horses were not long in being found, for Colonel Monette was also on the lookout for them, and the third day from their arrival at the fort, Buffalo Bill was surprised to see two splendid animals brought to his door, one a gift from the colonel and Marcia, the other a present from Captain and Mrs. Silver.

The very two beauties I wanted to get, and offered the sutler big money for, only he said they were sold," said Bill, gazing at the presents with the greatest admiration.

Having been thus mounted, Buffalo Bill began to prepare for the journey, when the sutler informed him that his pack saddle was already fully stored with provisions, blankets, ammunition and all that was necessary, Miss Monette having herself packed it and paid for all the things."

"I must get out of this, or they'll present me with a new suit of clothes, for that is all I lack now," said Buffalo Bill.

"There is an extra suit of fine buckskin, sash, hat and all, in your pack, for Lieutenant Coleman had it

made for himself, but it was too large for him, and he said it would just fit you, so I was told to put it in your outfit, and it will suit you as though made for you—just try it."

Buffalo Bill put the suit on, and though a trifle too fancy, he could not but feel that it was just what he wanted, and went over to thank the lieutenant for his kindness.

Then he made his way to call upon Colonel Monette, and thanked him and all for his magnificent presents, after which he said:

"Now, colonel, I am ready for the trail, sir."

"Cody, I am compelled to ask a favor of you, though you came here, as General Carr's letter states, for other and special work."

"Yes, sir, and the courier, Red Wing, who brought you warning from a mysterious white chief among the Comanches, proves that I am going on the trail of one who exists."

"Oh, yes, we all here well know that such a man exists, and have thought that he was our foe, the ally of both Mexican raiders and Indians, and have been anxious to get in touch with him, but could not.

"Now he has done us a service, and I hope that you will find out that he is not a renegade.

"But this morning the scouts sent out returned and reported that my two scouts, who were leading me the other day from Fort Rio to Fort Dare here, when you overtook us, were ambushed and killed, for they brought in their bodies, and that was why they did not come back to me.

"Now I am very anxious about several military posts on the border of the Comanche country, and with small garrisons, and I wish to send dispatches to the general for more troops, and you are the only man I dare ask to run the death gantlet.

"That I ask you to do so, when not under my command, and having a special duty to perform for General Carr, is because that duty will take you within fifty miles or so of Post Number One, and I must communicate with Major Totten there."

"I will carry the dispatches, sir, and have a look out to my special duty also."

"I thank you and am only sorry you go alone, Cody."

"I don't mind it, sir, for I can take better care of one than I can of a number."

Soon after he received the dispatches, and bidding good-by to those whom he served so well, and whose friendship he had won, he went to his quarters, mounted one horse, and with the other in lead, rode out of the fort.

His going had become known, and the soldiers had assembled to give a sendoff in a parting cheer.

He raised his sombrero with graceful courtesy, and those who looked upon his darkly-bronzed face could not see there one trace of anxiety about the

future, no dread of the long and dangerous trail he was to follow.

On he went until he had disappeared in the distance from those who still watched him, for many predicted that he would never be heard of again.

Marcia also saw him go away, and heard the prophecies of its being his last trail, and she mused:

"Somehow I do not fear that he is doomed, for such as Buffalo Bill can conquer untold dangers."

So on his way Buffalo Bill went, with no fear for his own safety, and ready to face every danger that crossed his trail.

He reached the scene of the desperate fight for life just at sunset, and unmindful of the haunting specters that might linger there, fed his horses with feed brought from the fort, and spreading his blankets, ate his supper, and then sat down to enjoy one of a box of cigars Major Canfield had given him.

At last he finished his cigar, and throwing himself down upon his blankets, was soon fast asleep, feeling assured that there was no redskin near him, save those in their graves a few feet from his lonely camp.

CHAPTER CLXXIV.

A GOOD FRIEND TO A RED FOE.

The night passed without anything to disturb the scout's slumber, and as there was no water near, it being a dry camp, Bill mounted and rode on to the stream where Major Canfield had had his battle with the Indians, to have his breakfast there.

Good water, good grass and some wood for a fire was what he wanted, and that he found in abundance.

He had crossed to the other side, where there was timber, staked out his horses, and was picking up an armful of timber, when he started, stopped short, the wood fell from his arms, and he had his revolver in his hand, all in an instant.

What had startled him was an Indian lying in a clump of bushes.

But he did not draw trigger, for the words checked him, for they were:

"Let the paleface kill. The Red Wing can die like a Comanche."

"What! are you the Red Wing, and are you wounded?"

"Yes, me Red Wing. Let the paleface kill me."

"Oh, no, for I have heard of you, my good red brother; you are the friend of the Lone Medicine man, the messenger that warned Colonel Monette of his danger the day I rode to the fort for aid."

"Yes, me red brother of Lone Medicine Chief—me tell big white chief Comanche on his trail—then come to my people—see, me hurt heap bad."

The scout had replaced his revolver in his belt, and kneeling by the side of the redskin, he said:

"I am your friend, Pard Comanche, for you did Colonel Monette a favor I will not forget.

"Let me look at your wound."

The wound was a severe one, the bullet having passed through the foot, which was inflamed and swollen terribly.

"I'll fix you all right soon, Red Wing, but that wound is an ugly one, and you look half starved."

"Red Wing no eat for two, three, four days—have heap suffer."

"Poor fellow; but you are all right now, I am here to help you," and the scout quickly built a fire, put his coffee pot on, with a large tin cup of water with which to wash the wound.

He then prepared breakfast, and first fed the half-famished redskin, who ate with an appetite that showed he had suffered for food.

Breakfast being over, Bill went to his saddle-pocket for what he was never without—a little leather case containing lint, bandages, several surgical instruments, a bottle of arnica, another of witch hazel, and several other necessities that could not be gotten along without in frontier life.

He found not far away the dead body of the Indian's horse, with the saddle, bridle and traps upon it, which Colonel Monette had given him.

Wolves ran snarling away from the carcass at his approach, and birds of the air took flight also, so he stripped the torn body of the horse of its trappings, and carried them to where the Indian lay calmly watching him.

"Me come here keep wolf from eat Red Wing," he explained, as the scout returned.

"Poor fellow, you have had a hard time of it.

"You were shot the day of the fight at the fort?"

"Yes, pony wounded Red Wing, too.

"Pony fall on Red Wing, and braves run away fast and leave him.

"Soldiers no came here, so not see Red Wing, and he stay here to die, for he no walk."

Spreading the blankets of the Indian upon the ground, and making him comfortable, the scout then took the tepid water and began to bathe the wounded foot.

The swelling gradually subsided, and he could see that the bullet had passed entirely through the foot, while, using his probe, he was glad to find that the bone, though injured, was not broken.

After bathing it for a long time, he bound it up securely, and saw that Red Wing had dropped off into deep slumber.

"It was a close call for him, but I guess he'll be all right.

"I'll go now, and catch that stray pony I saw a while ago in the timber."

He soon found the pony—a good animal, whose Indian owner had doubtless been killed, for he still

had his saddle and bridle on—and a throw of the lasso secured him.

"You are not a bad pony, and will carry the Red Wing well, so I won't have to double the weight on my led horse," muttered Bill, as he led the pony back to his little camp.

Red Wing awoke at his coming, and said, as he recognized the pony:

"It was the Chief Panther's pony. Him heap good pony."

"Well, he is yours, Red Wing, and I guess if I doctor your foot all day you will be able to ride to-morrow."

"Me go now, heap some better."

"No, you need rest and food before starting, and your foot will be much better to-morrow, while I am not in a great hurry, as the dispatches I carry are not urgent."

"Where go?"

"Red Wing, I'll tell you just where I am going, and you are the very redskin to help me," said Buffalo Bill, in sudden earnestness.

It had suddenly occurred to Buffalo Bill that he had come upon the very one to help him in the work he had on hand.

He had acted wholly from sympathy and kindness of heart toward a foe, but now he remembered that being a friend of the Lone White Chief, the Red Wing doubtless knew where he lived.

The Indian would doubtless guide him directly to the White Chief.

So he said:

"The Red Wing knows the tepee of the Lone Medicine Chief?"

"Red Wing know."

"I was going to see the Lone Chief, for I wish to talk to him, and I want the Red Wing to guide me to his tepee."

"Red Wing will go with the white scalp-taker."

"All right, I'll fix you up so that you can ride all right; we will go slow, and when we leave the tepee of the Lone Medicine Chief, the Red Wing can go back to his own people."

"No take me among palefaces to kill me?"

"Not I, for I am not that kind of a man."

"If I found the Red Wing was my worst foe, I would help him, and let him go his way; but if he was to meet me in battle again, then he would have to take care that I did not raise his scalp, for a sick Injun and a well Injun are two very different things to me."

The Red Wing seemed to master just what the scout meant, and smiled, while he held out his hand, and said:

"White hunter heap brave, heap good."

"Red Wing white hunter's red brother."

As it was nearing dinner-time, Buffalo Bill cooked another meal, and the Indian once more ate heartily.

Soon after he dressed his wound again, and then the scout took a little walk to bring down some game.

After a short while he shot a deer, and soon after a wild turkey; so, loaded with game, he returned to his camp, and, getting out his fishing tackle, began to fish in the stream. Red Wing aided him in this sport, and proved himself an excellent fisherman.

Thus the afternoon passed, and the Indian greatly relished his supper of fried fish, crackers and coffee.

Before going to sleep, the wound was dressed again, and when Bill looked at it the next morning he was glad to see that his treatment had greatly reduced the swelling and inflammation, while Red Wing said that it no longer gave him much pain.

"Do you think you can ride now, Red Wing?"

"Me ride all right."

So the Indian pony was saddled and bridled, and Red Wing was aided to mount, his wounded foot being placed in a blanket swing fastened to the horn of the saddle.

Then the scout mounted, and, with his pack-horse in lead, the trail was taken down the stream.

Buffalo Bill took the direction the Indian told him to take, and halted early and rested for a long time, and Red Wing seemed to understand and appreciate why he did so, for he could not have been more kind to a child.

The next morning both were glad to see that the wound was steadily improving, and the Red Wing said:

"White Hunter heap good medicine man."

"Red Wing have him for brother."

"See Lone Medicine Chief tepee to-night."

"All right, and you can stay there until you get well."

"White hunter go north?"

"Yes."

"Comanche heap mad now; see white hunter kill him; but Red Wing go and no kill him if see him."

"You are a brick, Injun, and no mistake; but I take chances always, and if I couldn't fight my way through those I couldn't give the slip, why, it would lose me my hair; but yet I'll be glad of your good efforts in my behalf, after I've had a talk with the Lone Medicine Chief."

Another long halt was made at noon, and, a couple of hours after the trail was continued, Buffalo Bill said:

"We are getting into a mighty nice country, Red Wing."

"Yes, Lone Medicine Chief country."

"Him have pleny pony, plenty cattle—heap rich."

Buffalo Bill observed that the country was well watered, rolling and timbered, while the grass was plentiful.

When the sun was yet an hour above the western horizon, they ascended a rise which revealed a beau-

tiful valley, sheltered by high ranges of hills upon either side.

Along the base of each range flowed a stream, winding down the valley until they came together, forming one stream.

In the fork of the two was a hill, sloping up the valley, but abrupt on each side overhanging the streams, and upon its summit, which was well timbered, were several adobe cabins.

In the forks of the streams, traversing over a space of many hundreds of acres, were herds of cattle, and a drove of ponies, among which was a number of large horses.

"Ah! there is a ranch," cried Buffalo Bill, in surprise.

"It tepee of Lone White Chief."

"Well, he certainly has pitched his tent in a beautiful spot, and one he can defend.

"He has fine cattle there, too; yes, and a splendid lot of ponies and horses.

"I guess that he is pretty well fixed, and the only thing that surprises me is that you Comanches don't make short work of him."

"No, Comanche love Lone Medicine Chief."

"Has he got any pards with him?"

The Comanche held up five fingers to indicate the number, and said:

"So many braves."

"Well, we will give him a call, Red Wing, though he never invited us to do so, and see how he welcomes us; and Buffalo Bill urged his horse forward once more.

CHAPTER CLXXV.

THE LONE CHIEF'S HOME.

The remark of Buffalo Bill the Comanche did not seem to wholly understand, and it appeared to dawn upon him suddenly that he had done wrong in guiding the scout to the lone ranch, for he said, quickly:

"The White Hunter is the friend of Lone Medicine Chief?"

"Oh, yes, I am his friend."

"If White Hunter want to harm him, Red Wing heap rather die than bring him here."

"Rest easy, Red Wing, for I am the friend of the Lone Medicine Chief—do we cross here?" and they had now come to the ford.

"Yes, cross river—heap good place—bad place yonder," and he motioned up and down the stream.

What the Comanche meant by a heap good and bad crossing the scout soon discovered, as he saw that the ford was about the only one as far as his eye ranged up and down the stream.

The banks were fringed with trees on the ranch side, but barren on the other, and the ascent on the shore they were approaching was steep and rugged.

At the top of the steep, short hill, was a barrier to keep the cattle from crossing, but this Buffalo Bill took down for them to pass through, putting it up again behind them.

As they turned toward the ranch, Buffalo Bill saw a horseman in the timber watching them, but the quick eye of the Comanche had already seen him, and he raised both hands above his head and thus rode forward.

Nearing the timber, Buffalo Bill was struck with its park-like beauty, and saw that the ranch was a pleasant home there in those dangerous wilds.

He soon discovered that there was an abode structure of considerable size, and he recognized it as one of the old Spanish missions still to be found in that country, it having once been a chapel, with the out-buildings around it.

To one side was a little cemetery, long since crumbled to decay.

The best houses of the mission had been taken to dwell in.

The horseman who was watching their approach calmly awaited their coming, his rifle lying across his saddle, and ready for use if need be.

When Bill had taken in the ranch and its surroundings, he turned his attention to the horseman.

His face was dark, and he wore his hair long, but he was American in appearance.

"Ho, Red Wing, you are off your trail; and who is your pard?" he called out, as the two approached.

"Red Wing heap bad hurt, come to see Lone Medicine Chief, bring paleface brother to see him."

The ranchman glanced at the wounded foot of the Indian in his blanket support, and then at the scout, and said:

"I think I know you, sir. Are you not Buffalo Bill?"

"That is what I am called; but do I fail to recall an old pard?"

"No; I only saw you once, several years ago, up in the Mormon country, but you have a face not easily forgotten.

"Do you know the chief?"

"If you mean Dr. Adrian Valdon, I did know him, and owe him some favors I should like to repay.

"I came by here to see him."

"You are the first visitor he has had, and I am sorry he is away."

"Then he is not at home?" quickly said Buffalo Bill.

"No, he is away hunting, for he goes often on long hunting expeditions, but you are welcome, and I will try to entertain you, for I am chief cowboy of the ranch."

"You are very kind, and I will accept your hospitality for the night, at least; but when do you expect Dr. Valdon?"

"It is hard to tell, for he may be gone a week or

more, and perhaps return to-night; but come, and we will entertain you, for I have four comrades here with me."

He led the way to the buildings, and Buffalo Bill was asked to dismount, and the leader, whom his comrades called Rio Ralph, said:

"This is Buffalo Bill, the great scout, pard. You all know him by name."

The men gave the scout a cordial welcome, showed no curiosity as to his coming, and all expressed regret at their chief being absent.

All of them seemed to know the Comanche well, and to like him, for they helped him to dismount, and the leader said:

"I've learned enough medicine and scientific cutting from the doctor, Red Wing, to fix your foot up in fine shape, though I guess Buffalo Bill has cared pretty well for it."

They all spoke of the ranchero as "the doctor" and "Doctor Chief," and seemed to be very much attached to him.

"We will give you the doctor's tepee, Buffalo Bill, and you will find it comfortable," Rio Ralph said, and he opened the door in the rear of the old mission chapel, in which there was one large room, with a door leading into a second one.

These two were in good condition, but the rest of the old chapel was a ruin.

In the other buildings near, the ranchmen had their quarters, and Red Wing was made comfortable in one of them.

Glancing about the ranch, Bill saw half-a-dozen large and savage dogs, and they seemed to consider his coming all right, and were not in a hostile mood toward him.

His horses had been taken by one of the ranchmen and cared for, and he was told that supper would be ready after a while, and that he must make himself perfectly at home.

He looked around the large room he had entered and was surprised.

Handsome woven blankets were on the adobe floor as mats, and the walls were hung with Mexican and Indian ornaments.

There was a table and a large homemade easy-chair, a couple of shelves filled with books, an easel with a half-finished painting on it, a medicine chest in which were bottles and surgical instruments, and rifles, revolvers and knives hanging on brackets.

The room was a most attractive one, looking more like an artist's studio than a ranchman's home.

The adjoining room was used as a sleeping apartment, and it, too, was fitted up most comfortably.

"Well, this is a strange home in the wilderness," muttered Buffalo Bill, as he glanced about him.

"There's nothing hidden here, for I am given the chief's quarter and made perfectly at home, so I can

see nothing that would indicate anything wrong going on.

"Still, I shall sleep with one eye open.

"I'll keep trailing the mystery until something turns up."

So mused Buffalo Bill, as he stood looking about him in the ranchero's rooms.

He was not long in discovering that it was the home of no ordinary man; yet why should such a man, one of refinement, education, and with a profession, seek a home in that wilderness, was a question that he could not answer.

It would seem, judging from his standpoint, of men he had met upon the border with every claim to lead a different life, hiding themselves in a wild life, that they were fugitives from justice, had committed some crime which had driven them from their fellows who knew them.

But had such a man as Dr. Adrian Valdon appeared to be hidden himself there to escape the law or just punishment?"

Bill then glanced over the books on the shelves.

He saw that some of them were medical works, others historical and biographical, still more were scientific, and a few of lighter literature.

The paintings on the wall were by an artistic hand and of scenes on the frontier, so that the scout deemed them the work of the ranchero, as there was an unfinished sketch on the easel.

He saw writing materials on the table, and beheld several maps, exceedingly well drawn, and evidently of that part of the country, while he noticed in one corner a surveyor's stand and instruments.

There was a large scrapbook of pressed wild flowers, with their botanical names under each.

A photograph of a beautiful maiden of eighteen or twenty and a handsome young man in the uniform of the Mexican army was there.

One glance at the face, and Buffalo Bill said:

"Ah, I think I have his secret now, for that is his likeness and this must be the one he loved—yes, and lost; else why did he leave her?"

"It is the same old story of a love affair, I guess, for we all noticed his extremely sad face.

"But he must be a Mexican instead of a Texan, after all, for he wears here the uniform of a captain of Mexican lancers.

"How handsome he is, and how beautiful is the face of this woman," and Buffalo Bill gazed admiringly at the picture before him.

Then he walked out into the plaza and met Rio Ralph coming to take him to supper, for the men had their meals in one of the adobe cabins not far away.

"I guess you saved that Injun's life for him, sir, for he had a bad wound of it; but it is coming around all right now."

The ranchman ushered Bill into the cabin, where

the others were already assembled, Red Wing looking very smiling over the prospect of a good supper, and the fact that his foot was on the high road to recovery.

"Take the doctor's seat, sir," said Rio Ralph, and Buffalo Bill was surprised to find that the table service was of china.

But the supper surprised him more, for there were potatoes, fried chicken, hot biscuits, milk, butter and coffee.

"We have a vegetable garden here, and our own cows, so we have plenty of milk and butter, for the chief will live like a gentleman," said Rio Ralph.

The meal was heartily enjoyed, and after it was over and the dishes washed, Rio Ralph got down his guitar, another his flute, a third his violin, and Buffalo Bill felt that he had never listened to sweeter music, while Red Wing appeared also delighted.

They also sang ballads, and for a couple of hours Bill was charmed by his very hospitable hosts.

"And you dwell here in seeming content?" said the scout, anxious to lead the men on to talk.

"Oh, yes, though at times it is a trifle lonely.

"We have the cattle to look after, the garden to plant, horses to break.

"The doctor reads to us a good deal, we have our music, fishing and hunting, and, in fact, get along well."

"And neither the Mexican raiders nor the Indians seem to trouble you?" suggested Buffalo Bill.

"No, they do us no harm," was the reply, and the hospitality he had received, and the trust shown in him, prevented questioning the ranchmen any further, for he did not wish to appear to be prying into the lone ranchero's affairs.

CHAPTER CLXXVI.

A RIDE OF GREAT DANGER.

Buffalo Bill felt that in coming to the ranch of the doctor, the mystery hanging over him had, if anything, deepened.

He had found the ranchman living with a few cowboys on his ranch, and where he was not disturbed by Indians or outlaws.

He had also discovered that his surroundings were not of a low order, but with every evidence of refinement about him, and his men were devoted to him, while he beheld his likeness in the uniform of a Mexican captain of cavalry, though he had said he was a Texan.

That night Buffalo Bill slept well, and awoke to find a tempting breakfast ready for him.

Rio Ralph had already again dressed the Indian's wounded foot, and Red Wing said that he would be able to walk in a few weeks, he felt sure.

Stating that he could not remain to await the doc-

tor, Buffalo Bill also expressed his intention of departing soon after breakfast.

"Which way do you go from here, pard?" he was asked.

"To the northward, into New Mexico, and then on to my fort, where I am chief of the scouts," was the answer.

"You are new to this country, I take it?"

"Yes, I was at Fort Dare once before my last trip there."

"Are you aware that you have to go through the Indian country on your trail northward?"

"Oh, yes."

"You do not appear to be much disturbed by it?"

"Well, you see, I live in a land of danger, and if I have to face trouble I do not worry over it until the time to meet it."

"A good idea, but, pard, as good a scout as you are, and as brave a man, I do not believe you can get through the trail to the north of us, for the redskins just now are in a very ugly mood, and they are scouting everywhere.

"Should you build a campfire, they would see it, and your trail they will notice and follow, while you would run upon them time and again."

"It is not a pleasant picture you are painting for me, pard, but Red Wing has promised to pilot me through."

"He could do so under ordinary circumstances, but not now, when the whole tribe is roaming about and as ugly in humor as the devil.

"He could offer no excuse for you, and, in fact, if the Indians doubted him, both of you would have to go."

"It will be a long trail for me to flank around."

"Yes, and with the same danger in flanking, so I will be your guide through the Indian country."

"You, pard?" and Buffalo Bill looked at Rio Ralph with surprise.

"Yes, for Red Wing must remain here and get well, or he will lose that foot of his, perhaps his life.

"You are a friend of the doctor, and so I will guide you through the Comanche country."

"And you can do so?"

"Oh, yes."

"They will see the trail all the same."

"Oh, yes, I shall make no effort to avoid them but go as the crow flies, as near as I can."

"You mean that the Indians will not harm you?"

"I mean just that, so you are safe, but you must not go as Buffalo Bill, but as one of the doctor's men, a new man, as they know all of us.

"I can rig you out all right, but I wish you could stay until the doctor returns."

"It will be impossible just now."

"Then I will be ready in half-an-hour, for I will take a pack-horse along, too, and plenty of provisions, so that we will not suffer."

"I have no claim upon you, for you to do this for me."

"You have the claim of humanity, and you would lose your life sure if I did not go along."

Half-an-hour after the two rode away from the ranch, each with a horse in lead, Buffalo Bill having left the pony for Red Wing, who parted from the scout with feelings of real regret.

Rio Ralph was splendidly mounted, and he was dressed now in a Mexican suit, sombrero and all.

He led the way to the same ford, the only one, he explained, where there was an entrance to the peninsula of land on which the ranch was located.

Once across, on the other shore, he struck off on a bee-line across the country.

He set the pace at a fast walk, and held it steadily for several hours, when they halted at a small stream for dinner.

Though nearing the locality where the Indians would doubtless be roaming about, he did not hesitate to build a fire and cook dinner.

"Can there be treachery at the bottom of all this?" mused Bill, for the fact that he had no fear of the redskins or the outlaws that would raid across the Rio Grande constantly flitted through the scout's mind, and he was sure that he entered upon a very desperate ride under the guidance of one who might be leading him to his death.

The halt that noon was for an hour only, and the next camp was at sunset, not an Indian having been seen.

When the supper was over, Buffalo Bill saw that the Texan heaped wood on the fire, as though he wished it to burn all night, and then hung up near it, where it would be in full view of anyone approaching the camp, a gayly colored Mexican serape.

He made no comment, but felt sure that the serape was put up as a signal of some kind, and he remembered that during the day the Texan had worn the same blanket suspended from his shoulders.

Buffalo Bill went to his blankets with the firm determination to be on his guard against a surprise or treachery, and slept with his rifle and revolvers close at hand to grasp at an instant's notice.

The night passed, however, without any incident, and, when breakfast was being eaten, Buffalo Bill called out quickly as he sprung to his feet:

"Indians!"

"And they are coming on the jump."

The Texan did not even rise, but said:

"All right, let them come, for they see the signal, and know we are not foes."

The Indians discovered by Buffalo Bill were a dozen in number, and were coming with their ponies at a gallop, having just come over a rise half-a-mile away.

"You do not fear them—you are sure?"

"Oh, no, they are all right."

"There are only a dozen, and we could wipe them out, if you think——"

"No, no, a shot at them would cost us our lives at once, for they are not alone."

"I told you that I did not avoid them, nor did I care to seek them, but they are coming, so let me tell you that there will be no trouble, and you will run the death gantlet in safety."

"I'll chance it, pard."

"Let me ask you if you think any of these Indians know you?"

"Well, I have made the acquaintance of the Comanches several times, but have not met them closer than revolver range, so I do not think they will recognize me."

"I hope not, but I must receive them now and let them clean up the remnants of our breakfast," and Rio Ralph rose and faced the Indians as they came up.

They came with a rush, gave a warwhoop, and drew rein suddenly, and the chief, leaping to the ground first, extended his hand to the Texan, who spoke to them in their own tongue, and he spoke it fluently.

Buffalo Bill saw that he was the object of conversation, and he nodded in a friendly way to the Indians, but was ready to draw his revolvers in a second if there came need for it.

"Pard, we must ask our red brothers to breakfast with us, so will you help out with the cooking?" said Rio Ralph, turning to Bill, who at once set to work to obey.

The Indians dismounted, and all came forward and shook hands with Buffalo Bill, grunting forth their pleasure at meeting him.

He gave them a good breakfast, and when it was over he discovered that they were to serve as an escort, for, having nothing to do, they had an eye on the dinner and supper that the two white men were yet to have during the day.

"There is no help for it, pard, for I had to ask them to go along, though they will breed a famine in our stores, I fear, but we will strike their village before supper, and live on them, as we will stay there to-night."

"Stay in their village?" asked Buffalo Bill, in surprise.

"Oh, yes, for you are in for it now, and will have to run the gantlet clean through as far as I go with you."

"You are very kind, pard, but I don't just hanker after so much Indian society, but I'm not kicking, so just play the game to suit yourself, and when I have a trump card I'll lay it down," and Buffalo Bill resigned himself to his fate, be it what it might.

At the dinner that day the Texan was very sparing in what he got out of the pack, for he knew

that if he set all he had before the dozen ravenous braves they would eat every morsel of it.

He did not halt long, either, for he was anxious to reach the Indian village before night, and save the further draw upon his larder.

This he did, though the redskins seemed disappointed not to have a supper while on the trail, and tried to deceive the Texan as to the way, so as to make him camp, but he was too cunning for that, and reached the Indian village before nightfall.

There were several thousand Indians in the village, and all turned out to welcome the visitors, causing Buffalo Bill to remark in a low tone:

"I am sorry we are so popular, pard."

The Texan laughed, and made his way to the chief's quarters, when he was at once made welcome, he and his strange comrade, for they little dreamed that they were entertaining a bitter foe unawares—the great Buffalo Bill.

Buffalo Bill, in spite of his iron nerve, could not but feel his helplessness there in that Indian village.

He saw that the Texan felt at home, that he appeared to be respected by the Indians, and the chief held a long conversation with him, but yet he could not but realize that a very thin barrier was between him and death.

But he did not show any anxiety, and, rolling himself in his blankets, after he had eaten the not very tempting supper, sought to forget his hopes and fears in sleep.

This his will power enabled him to do, and he did not awake till morning, when the Texan was all ready to start on his way.

They were to be escorted by their friends of the day before, it looked like, with as many more to keep them company, but the cunning of Rio Ralph came to his aid here, and he got rid of them, in some way unknown to Buffalo Bill, but which won his admiration.

That morning they met several roving bands of Indians, but did not delay long with them, as Rio Ralph pressed steadily on, and when they camped at noon he said:

"I will have to leave you here, pard Buffalo Bill, for you will hardly meet any more redskins, though it is possible that you may.

"I wish you to wear this serape over your shoulders, though, and when you camp at night, hang it up in the bright firelight.

"This trail will lead you to the river, which, when you cross, keep up the right bank of until you strike the trail which you are familiar with, and then it is plain sailing with you.

"I had hoped to find an Indian in the village whom I could send on ahead to this camp, to act as your guide, but he was not there, and I did not care to hunt any other.

"I would not leave you now, only the chief, Gold

Face, whom you saw was wounded, gave me some information which I must hasten back to the ranch and report to the doctor."

"Don't mind me, pard, for you have already been most kind, and you know I am used to being alone in the country.

"I can find my way all right, and I hope to get through without a brush with the redskins, only they must not crowd me too hard."

"If you do meet them, let me tell you how to show them that you are a friend, or at least profess to be.

"Just turn your back to them, and raise your hands above your head.

"It is the signal of the doctor and his men, and if you cannot talk their lingo, they will understand it, and pass you as surely as though you had met a band of Masons and given them the grip."

"I shall remember it, pard."

"And there is one thing more I wish to tell you of."

"Yes?"

"You may not see it, yet it will be well to warn you."

"What is it?"

"Of course, you do not believe in ghosts?"

Buffalo Bill laughed.

"Nor spooks, nor such?"

"Not I."

"Well, the Indians bring in strange stories of a specter being seen on the trail you follow northward from here."

"A specter?"

"Yes, and they avoid the country as though it were the land of the evil spirit."

"What is it?"

"They say it is the spirit of a paleface woman, mounted on a white horse, and that she appears before them in their camp and on the trail, and moves her hands as though to warn them off."

"And they obey?"

"You bet they obey her, for they shun that part of the country religiously, as I said."

"I don't wonder."

"Now, you may, or you may not see her, for I have never yet done so, though I have gone over the trail several times, but the chief told me that the doctor had seen her and trailed her, too, though he never spoke to us about it."

"Well, if I see the specter, I will trail her, pard, and some day, when we meet again, tell you all about her," said Buffalo Bill, with a smile.

"Of course, I don't believe in such things, but it is certain that the Comanches have seen something to alarm them, but who or what is playing ghost, nobody knows."

After a smoke and a long chat, when dinner was over, Buffalo Bill said he had better be going on his way, and, the horses being saddled, the two men

parted, with a warm grasp of the hand, for the scout had now come to feel that whatever the Texan might be to him, he was certainly a friend in need.

With his pack-horse in lead, Buffalo Bill rode away from the little camp, the ranchman doing the same, and, when he turned to look back, after having gone half a mile, he saw that Rio Ralph had done the same, and was waving his sombrero at him.

The scout returned the salute, and once more continued on his way, the trail now being a well-defined one that he was to follow.

CHAPTER CLXXVII.

THE WOMAN IN WHITE.

Buffalo Bill went on his way with the same conscious power in himself to get out of any difficulty that might occur that he had felt in the ranchman to protect him.

He was very cautious, and kept a bright lookout ahead and about him, for he was not so sure but that he would run upon some Indian prowlers.

The Texan had hinted that he had brought him that way, as he had to go back, feeling sure that there would be fewer Indians roving about near the country of the specter than by another and more direct trail.

But Buffalo Bill had not gone many miles before he came to a halt.

Before him, and coming toward him, he saw a band of redskins.

They were nearly fifty in number, and were riding rapidly, though their ponies seemed laden with game.

The scout at first thought that he would try to avoid them, but he had just crossed a small stream, and the trail was too fresh for them to fail to notice it, so he concluded to take his chances, though they had a very desperate look to him.

Riding into view out of the timber, he saw them halt and reconnoiter.

He then made a display of his gay serape, and, turning his back to the redskins, raised his hands above his head.

He heard an exclamation of some kind from them, and, glancing over his shoulder, saw that they were coming rapidly toward him.

Were they coming as friends or foes was the question.

In a little while they were close upon him, and for his life he could not have resisted the inclination to turn and face them.

When he did so—and he turned ready to fight to the death, if need be—he was relieved to see that they made no hostile demonstration.

His knowledge of Comanche was extremely limited, but he made signs of friendship, pointed to his serape, mentioned the name of the Lone Medicine

Chief in their tongue, and shook hands all around with the whole outfit.

Then he signed that he wished to make them a present, and he had just cigars enough to go around.

One redskin motioned that he would like something to drink, and Buffalo Bill handed over his canteen, but when the Indian discovered that it was water only the face he made caused the scout to laugh, and he signed as well as he could that he belonged to the prohibition party just at that time.

All looked disappointed at this, and then began to beg him for presents, pointing to his well-filled pack-saddles.

But he shook his head, and then they wished to trade one of their five-dollar ponies for his fine horses.

But he again shook his head, and pointed ahead, and every Indian at once looked in that direction, as though they expected to see the specter of the trail.

Another desired to bargain for his weapons, but was refused, and, as he moved on his way, they looked as mad as hornets, and talked earnestly together.

But the chief pointed to the serape, Buffalo Bill thought, and they went on their way, at the same rapid gallop they had been going when he saw them.

"Well, if that wasn't a young hell to pass through, I don't know anything," said Buffalo Bill, with a sigh, and he added:

"This serape fetched them, though; but I wish every one of those cigars was a cartridge to blow them to the happy hunting grounds.

"Why, they would have traded me out of everything I had, if I had yielded.

"I was terribly afraid that they would smell that flask of brandy that Major Canfield gave me, and said was good for a snake bite.

"Well, I'm through that ordeal, so now, what is the next?

"I'd a heap rather meet the specter than another half-hundred of those fellows, and the way they were anxious to get along I guess they were afraid of the specter, too, and did not wish night to catch them near her country.

"It will be bright moonlight to-night, just the kind of a night when ghosts are supposed to ramble, so I hope I'll get a look at her," and Buffalo Bill rode on his way once more, anxious to reach the river and cross before night.

This he did, and, going into the fringe of timber along the banks, he staked his horses out, while he went on foot to try to get a shot at several deer he saw feeding out upon the prairie.

He went along down the stream, under cover of the bank, for half-a-mile, and then tried to creep up on the deer.

The sun had set, and the full moon was rising over

the prairie, so that he had the deer in a good light, could he get near enough to fire on them.

But, hurrying along, they led him some distance off on the prairie, and then bounded suddenly away in rapid flight.

Rising from his crouching position to notice the cause of the deer's flight, Buffalo Bill was startled to hear the thud of rapidly falling hoofs, and to suddenly behold dash between him and the moonlight what appeared to be a specter horse and rider, the latter's arm raised as though in warning.

In spite of his nerve, Buffalo Bill was really startled at the sight he beheld.

The deer bounding away had given him warning that more than his presence had frightened them, and when he looked for the cause, it had so suddenly appeared over a rise in the prairie that he was completely taken aback for a moment, and even forgot to draw a revolver or unsling his rifle.

What he beheld was enough to startle any man, and would have put to flight one of less pluck than Buffalo Bill.

He saw a snow-white horse, apparently without saddle or bridle.

The horse was dashing along at full speed and had suddenly appeared over a rise in the prairie.

But the animal had a rider.

Upon his back, seated on a side-saddle, was what appeared to be a woman.

Her white face was revealed by the moonlight, as was also one bare arm, that was raised, the palm turned toward him, as though warning him back from the trail he was following.

He saw that she was clad in a robe as white as milk, a turban with long ends about her head, and as she dashed silently on the garments fluttered in the breeze.

She uttered no word, simply passed on in silence, with that warning gesture, which seemed to speak volumes.

"I could have dropped her horse with a bullet, but then I might have hurt the rider, and, being a woman, I would not wish to do that.

"But she looked the ghost, from hoof to top-knot.

"And what does it mean that a white woman is in this country, and playing ghost, too?

"If she is an Indian, she has got her face and arm daubed with white, that is certain.

"No, she's white, I am sure.

"But she seems to have a light about her, yes, and the horse, too, as though she had struck a bed of phosphorus.

"I'll look up the trail of that horse to-morrow, for he had hoofs, not wings, and just see where it leads to.

"But I don't blame the redskins for being scared

at her, or it, or whatever it may be, for it took me all aback at first, and no mistake.

"If it had been an Injun, it could have killed me, for I forgot I had a gun or a revolver until it had flitted away.

"I lost my deer—by Jove, no! there they are," and suddenly there came dashing by the scout half-a-dozen deer, at easy range.

Quick as a flash he fired, and down fell one of the deer.

Going to it, he ran his knife across the throat, threw the deer over his shoulders, and started back to camp.

He found all as he had left it.

The specter of the trail had certainly not been there.

Building a fire back under the shelter of the bank, he cut off what meat he wished, and soon had his supper ready.

Then he replenished his fire, and, not forgetting the advice of Rio Ralph, hung his gay serape upon where the light would fall upon it, shaking down his blankets a little distance off in the shadow.

He then brought his horses closer in from the timber, and turned in for the night, for no sound broke the silence save the howling of a wolf out on the prairie, as he scented the fresh deer meat and saw the glimmer of the fire light.

Without being disturbed, other than by wolves hunting a feast, Buffalo Bill passed the night, and by sunrise had eaten his breakfast, saddled up, and was ready for the trail.

But he rode out upon the prairie to where he had seen the specter form of the horse and rider the night before, and began to look carefully around for a trail.

He was not long in finding one, and muttered :

"That specter horse leaves his tracks behind him.

"Yes, and he goes in the very direction my trail lies, but wherever it goes, I follow, for I would like the experience of running down a ghost."

He followed the trail slowly, for he wished to make no mistake, and was glad to find that it went, after a mile or more, over toward the timber that bordered the river.

As he went on he discovered that the nature of the country was changing, that the prairie land was ending, and the hills loomed up ahead.

But on he continued, until he entered the hills, still following the fresh trail of the specter horse that had fled by him the night before.

"Now, I am nearing the end," he muttered, as he reached the hills, just at noon.

The trail he followed continued along the main one, and the pace the white horse had been going at, a swinging gallop, had slowed down, the tracks showed, to a walk.

Anxious to see what was at the trail's end, Bill de-

etermined not to halt there for a nooning, but to continue on his way.

The country became wilder, the hills higher, and here and there were large canyons penetrating the ranges.

There were streams to cross, and more and more the landscape took on a mountainous look.

Suddenly the scout drew rein, for he had come to the entrance of a canyon, into which all the trails led, from all directions, it seemed.

Here he dismounted, hitched his horse, and went forward on foot.

The canyon opened into a small fertile valley as he went along, and he came in sight of a frame structure by the side of a small stream and sheltered by heavy timber.

But the scout did not hesitate at the sight of it, only pressed on, prepared for what he might discover.

He was most cautious, however, going from tree to tree, and at last came to where a rustic bridge, a tree felled across it, spanned the stream.

Crossing the bridge, he approached the shanty, only a few yards distant, and was within fifty feet of the door, when a form stepped out of it.

It was the form of a man, tall, wearing long whiskers, and dressed in buckskin.

He had a belt full of arms about his waist, but at the sight of Bill gave a yell of mingled fury and fright, while he made a bound for the shelter of a tree.

"Hold on, Black Jack, I know you and have you overed," cried Buffalo Bill.

The man turned quickly, faced the scout, and shouted back:

"Yes, and I know you, too, Buffalo Bill, and the gang at your back."

But Bill did not turn to be caught by the trick, but said:

"Well, shall it be war, Black Jack, for you remember your threat, and I owe you a bullet or two?"

Buffalo Bill spoke calmly, revolver held in hand, and the man he faced had also drawn his weapon, and his sharp eyes were on the scout.

But in answer to the question put to him, he seemed to wish to gain time, for he said:

"I know I wounded you, Buffalo Bill, but I was escaping for my life then."

"Yes, you robbed your fellow-miners, stole the daughter of Hugh Turner from him, and got away."

"But I have found your nest, Black Jack, so we have got to come to terms or fight it out right here."

"What do you mean by terms?"

"Where is the money you robbed your comrades of?"

"I lost it."

"I believe that you lie; but what are you doing here?"

"I was driven out of the mines, so came here to hide, for I knew my life was safe nowhere else."

"Where is pretty Sue Turner?"

"See here, Buffalo Bill; I'll tell you something you do not know."

"Well?"

"Hugh Turner was my brother, and he ran off with the girl I loved, and that made me hate him."

"Years after I met him in the mines, but he did not know me, and I found that his wife was dead, that he had lost his money, and had come there to hunt gold."

"His wife died soon after they had reached the mines, and their child, Sue, was so much like her mother that I determined to steal her from him in revenge, and did."

"And took good care to rob every miner you could before you left."

"Luck had gone hard with me, so I had to have money."

"Then Sue is your niece?"

"Yes."

"Where is she?"

"She died from exposure on the trail here."

"Black Jack!"

"Yes."

"You are about as great a liar as I ever listened to, and that is saying a good deal!"

Quick as a flash the revolver of the desperado rose, and his finger was on the trigger, when, before he could pull it, Buffalo Bill's weapon flashed.

Black Jack's weapon went off also; but it was as he was falling, for the bullet of Buffalo Bill had pierced his brain.

Hardly had the echoes of the weapons died away, when there was heard the rapid fall of hoofs, and up the canyon came dashing at full speed a horse and rider.

It was the specter of the trail that Buffalo Bill had seen the night before, and when he saw who it was he lowered the rifle he had raised as though he expected to meet another foe.

Riding rapidly up to the cabin, she drew rein, glanced at the dead body of Black Jack, then at Buffalo Bill, and then asked, in an impressive tone:

"Who are you?"

CHAPTER CLXXVIII.

THE CAPTIVE.

Buffalo Bill looked at the rider of the white horse with mingled admiration and surprise.

She was a girl scarcely over twenty, and had a face of rare beauty, though it was now smeared over with a white powder.

She wore the same costume she had the night before, and seemed perfectly at home in the little sad-

dle that was strapped upon the splendid white animal, though bridle she had none.

She gazed upon the scout with a look that was hard to fathom, while he, in answer to her question, said:

"You are Sue Turner, once known as the Mascot of Moonlight Mine."

"Ah! you know me?" she said, excitedly, and then added:

"Yes, and I have met you before; let me tell you when and where—oh, yes, I recall you now, for you came to my father's cabin once, and you are—Buffalo Bill!"

"You are right, and you have a good memory, for that was ten years ago."

"And you have seen my father?" she eagerly cried.

"Yes, some months ago, and he has struck it rich, and will soon leave the mines.

"He sought in vain to find you, and gave you up for dead, and then, as a recompense for your loss, he struck a new lead that panned out splendidly."

"My poor, poor father!"

"How he must have suffered on my account; but then you have avenged him and me," and she pointed to the body of Black Jack, which she had seemed to hardly notice before.

"I followed your trail here, for you passed me last night on the prairie, and Black Jack sought to kill me, but I was too quick for him."

"Thank Heaven! Now my life begins anew, for, oh! what have I not suffered at his hands!"

"He was my father's brother, and stole me to avenge himself on my father, because my mother would not marry him.

"He stole, oh, so much money, and then fled with me, and Satan seemed to aid him, for he eluded all pursuit, but at last he was forced to flee from civilization, and come here.

"He had been here before, and believed he would find gold in great quantities, while he promised me he would take me back to my father if I would aid him.

"I did so, and we came here, built this cabin, and here he has lived, slaving himself day after day in search of gold.

"Twice each year he would go away for a couple of weeks, leaving me alone and taking both horses with him, for he went after provisions, to some settlement, I suppose.

"I could not escape, on foot, and without food or weapons, but I was hoping, hoping all the time my captivity would end.

"Afraid of the Indians, he urged me to play spectator, and I did so, for, by so doing, I could learn the trails, and each time I went away, I extended my rides further, intending to make a break for freedom, if I died on the trail.

"So it was you I passed last night!"

"Yes."

"I had seen some Indians a short while before, and only caught a glimpse of you, so supposed you were one.

"If I had only known who you were!"

"It is just as well as it is, for now you can return with me to your father, as my trail back leads me not many miles from where he is."

"Oh, how glad I will be, and will poor papa not be happy, too!"

"Indeed, he will, but did not Black Jack find any gold here?"

"Not a dollar's worth, but he has all that he robbed my father and others of when he ran off, and I have seen him count it over, night after night; and it is just seven thousand dollars.

"I know its hiding-place, too; but you will bury him, will you not?"

"Oh, yes, he is human, bad as he was."

"I will go first after my horses, as I do not wish to lose them."

"No fear, for no Indian will come near here, and I have never seen a white man since we came here, except the hateful face of my uncle—no, no, I must not speak ill of him, now that he is dead," and she shuddered as she glanced at the dead form of the desperado.

Then, springing from her horse, she turned the animal loose, and said:

"Now, while you go after your horses, I will get dinner, for I have been hunting and am hungry.

"See, I have some game, and some fish, too," and she held up a string of birds and another of fish, for she had thrown them upon the ground when she rode up.

"What did you kill those birds with?"

"My revolver," and she took a revolver from her robe.

"You are a good shot."

"I never miss," was the confident reply.

"My uncle would not trust me with a revolver, at first, fearing that I would kill him; and I used a bow and arrows to kill game with; but, at last, he let me take firearms, and I practiced all I could, for I had it in my heart to escape some day, even if I had to take his life, and I knew I would have to be a good shot.

"It is strange that he did not kill you, Buffalo Bill, for he was as quick as a flash, and a dead shot."

"I am something of a shot myself, and a trifle quick," modestly replied Bill, and he was going to fetch his horse, when she said:

"Please take that out of sight."

It was the body that she referred to, and Buffalo Bill bore it to a spot beyond the rustic bridge.

Buffalo Bill found his horses all right, and, taking them up to the cabin, put them up in the canyon, where the two horses of the desperado were kept,

the splendid white that played "specter steed," and fine roan.

During the dinner, Sue explained to Buffalo Bill just what she had lately discovered the plot of the desperado to be.

"He kept himself posted, I am sure of my father's movements, and knew that he was making money rapidly, and I do believe that he intended to take his life, and then, shaving his beard off, cutting his hair, and, playing the gentleman, go there and claim his fortune, for there is no other heir than myself.

"Yes, you came just in time, for had you not have come so, I would have acted, cruel as it would have seemed for me to take my uncle's life.

"Then I would have packed up, taken the horses, and started on the trail he was wont to go, leaving it to the instinct of the animals to carry me on to the settlement to which he went for supplies.

"You are a brave girl, Sue, and would, no doubt, have gotten through in safety, while, in self-defense, I would have been perfectly justifiable for you to take the life of the man who was persecuting you, and intended to kill your father."

"Well, I have heard him talking to himself, for it was a habit he could never break himself of, and instinctively heard him utter these words:

"He'd struck it rich, they told me, and when he has got more it will be my time to strike, for I can get all, once I put her out of the way, for I will be the heir."

"These words burned into my brain, Buffalo Bill, until, at last, I had made up my mind to act, and in short while more I would have done so, but, thank heaven, you have come.

"I will go with you to help you bury him, for don't think me cruel for saying so—I will only feel happy when I see the grave heaped up over him," and after look swept over the face of the young girl, as he walked down the canyon with Bill, he carrying the desperado's pick and shovel.

A spot was soon selected for the grave, which Buffalo Bill dug quickly, and the body, wrapped in a blanket, was placed within it.

Sue Turner said in a low, impressive voice:

"God forgive him, for I never can."

She turned abruptly away, and, at once returning to her cabin, set about preparing for her long journey.

The supplies were all put in the pack-saddle, which Black Jack had brought with him, and all else that the girl wished to carry along with her.

"We'll take the ghost robe along, for it may be that I will have to put it on."

"What for?"

"To scare the Indians."

"I would rather depend upon this," and Buffalo Bill patted his rifle.

"Don't you believe it, for when once they see me,

you will never get near enough to them to use your rifle.

"I tell you it is a great scare for them, and the only fun I have ever had here is in making them run.

"You see, I was afraid of them, too, and so was glad to play specter, and, oh! how they did 'git up an' git,' as the miners used to say, and 'hump themselves,' when I appeared, day or night."

"Well, you did look like a specter, I admit, and I guess it would be well to take the robe along."

"I hope we will see some redskins, so you can watch them light out.

"Why, when they would come this way hunting, I would show myself, and they would leave their game."

"I had heard of you before I saw you as a specter, Sue, for your fame had extended to a ranch I stopped at on my way here!"

Buffalo Bill then closed the cabin door, and, mounting his horse, rode away down the canyon, followed by the young girl.

In a large mining camp of Colorado was the home of Hugh Turner, the miner, whose daughter had been so ruthlessly stolen from him by his brother, and whose life had since been almost a wreck.

A tall, fine-looking man of fifty-five, he had become the idol of his comrades, for he had dared, years before, to bring into their midst his beautiful wife and pretty young daughter.

The wife had quickly faded and died, and the blow had been a cruel one to the husband, but he had laid her away in a pretty canyon, covered her grave with wild flowers, and devoted his life to getting gold and caring for his daughter.

Hugh Turner was ever generous, his hand was always extended to do good, and he was the most popular man in the mines, so that when Black Jack, a miner, had robbed his comrades and kidnapped Sue, the whole force of the mining camps had turned out in search of the man and his captive, though in vain.

It was a year before Hugh Turner gave that search up, and then he returned to the mines, a sad-faced man.

He soon after struck it rich in a mine, and when he gambled he always won.

All honest miners loved him, all evil ones feared him.

Yet Hugh Turner was a broken-hearted man, and seemed ever living in the past.

One evening he sat alone in his cabin, which was the best in the mining camps, and he was gazing idly into the fire, dreaming of the past.

A knock at his door was repeated before it aroused him, and then he called out:

"Come in, pard."

The door opened, and Hugh Turner sprang to his feet, while with outstretched hands he called out:

"Buffalo Bill, old pard, it is you, is it?"

"I am more than glad to see you, for I have not forgotten that you aided me in the chase after Black Jack, and had he not killed your horse and wounded you, you would have captured him."

"But, alas! I have never heard from him since, and she is dead."

"Don't you believe it, pard, for sit down and let me tell you some good news."

"Good news for me, Bill?"

"Yes, even for you, pard."

"What is it, for when I dig a fortune out of my mine I care little about it?"

"Well, I know where Black Jack is."

"You do?" shouted the man, almost in a frenzy, while he added:

"Tell me where he is, for I will have his life."

"Where is he, I say?"

"In his grave."

"It is not so, for he could not die by other hand than mine."

"Be calm, Hugh Turner, for I tell you he is in his grave, for I put him there."

"You buried him?"

"Yes, and killed him."

"Then you avenged me."

"Turner, do you know who he was?"

"A desperado of the worst type, one I befriended, and who then thus paid me for my kindness to him."

"You had a brother John, had you not?"

"Yes, poor fellow, he was younger than I, and loved my wife."

"When she married me, he ran off to sea, and I never heard of him again, but he hated me, and would never let me love him as a brother."

"Remember, if you can, if you recall in Black Jack any resemblance to your brother?"

"By Heaven, yes! Now, I know that he was none other than Jack Turner, a beardless boy when last I saw him."

"Yes, he it was that struck me this cruel blow."

"It is not so cruel now, for your daughter is not dead, Turner."

"Do you mean this?" and the miner looked squarely into the eyes of Buffalo Bill.

"Yes, he stole her and carried her away with him to a lone cabin in the Indian country."

"He knew you and sought revenge."

"Then he heard of your fortune, and decided some day to kill you and get it."

"He had your daughter playing ghost to scare off the Indians, and I saw her and tracked her to his cabin."

"I knew him, he recognized me, and I killed him while his finger was drawing trigger to shoot me down."

"Hugh Turner, your daughter was my comrade on the trail here, and she is—but come in, Sue."

The door flew back, and in rushed Sue Turner, while Buffalo Bill hastily left the cabin.

In an hour he returned, to find the father and daughter talking together and planning for the future.

"We have settled it all, Buffalo Bill, for we shall leave the mines and go East, where we can enjoy my large fortune together, while you must——"

"No, no, make no plans for me, Turner, for I remain at my post of duty on the frontier, but some day may come East and visit you."

The next morning Buffalo Bill was off again on the trail to the northward.

CHAPTER CLXXIX.

"WELL DONE, BUFFALO BILL!"

Buffalo Bill continued on with his dispatches to the military post, after leaving Hugh Turner and his daughter happy in being again reunited, and delivered them to Major Totten, who congratulated him on the wonderful ride he had made through the Indian country.

"I would be very much pleased, Buffalo Bill, if I could send return dispatches to Colonel Monette, though I do not suppose you feel like taking the desperate chances of another ride such as you had," said the major, a couple of days after the scout's arrival at the fort.

"Oh, yes, sir, for though I did not except to return to General Carr from here, I have had reason to change my mind to-day, and am willing to start at once for Fort Dare, though I will stop on my way for a night or day, at a ranch where I have a friend."

"Well, I will have the dispatches for you when you are ready to go."

Buffalo Bill had made a discovery in the fort that day that caused him to feel impatient to be off, and as soon as the dispatches were ready he started once more on the long and dangerous trail, and alone.

He decided to return as he had come, trusting in the serape, his claiming to be the brother of the White Medicine Chief, and the signal taught him by Rio Ralph to get him through the Indian country.

His horses were well rested, and he supplied himself with ample food and some presents to gladden an Indian's heart, and started.

The second night he halted at Black Jack's cabin, and slept there, undisturbed by any haunting ghost of the desperado he had slain.

From there on he did not see a redskin until he drew near the doctor's lone ranch, when a number surrounded him.

He gave the sign that had served so well before, and it was successful; but they eyed his well-filled pack, and in a way that caused him to become generous with its contents to save trouble, and this so

pleased the band of two dozen braves that they clung to him closer than a brother until he came in sight of the Lone Ranch.

The first man to greet him was Dr. Adrian Valdón himself, and the welcome was a cordial one.

A tall, splendid specimen of a man was the Lone Medicine Chief, with a sad, yet stern, face, and a courtly manner that was very winning.

"You are the only man who would have dared, or could have come to my ranch, Buffalo Bill, and your pluck alone has brought you through the Indian country, for the Comanches have all heard of you as a great Indian fighter of the northwest, and would prize your scalp above all things," said the doctor.

"I consider it valuable myself, doctor, but I risked it to come after you."

"After me?"

"Yes, for General Carr has been greatly worried about you, and strange reports came to him, so he asked me if I would come and look you up."

"You know you left his command for a certain purpose?"

"Yes, but I was a volunteer surgeon on his staff, serving only because his fort surgeons had been wounded, and my time was up."

"Oh, yes, he did not regard you as a deserter, but he was anxious about you, and no word had come direct from you, since your bold plan to go into the Comanche village and try to stop the ravages of smallpox."

"And I did so, after a time, and gained their friendship; but I had another notion in coming to this part of the country, and which you shall hear, for you deserve all my confidence after the risks you took to come to me."

"Let me tell you that I was a Confederate soldier, and, after the war, went to Mexico, where I became an officer in the army, and met and loved a Mexican girl."

"Called to the United States, I found, on my return, that the father of the girl I loved had been exiled from Mexico, his property taken, and he had gone into the mines of Colorado."

"I resigned my commission in the Mexican army, and sought to find him and his daughter, and I was looking for them when I joined General Carr."

"Then it was that I learned that the Mexican I sought had returned to the Rio Grande country, and, maddened by his wrongs on the part of his government, he had become a chief of Mexican outlaws, and an ally of the Comanches."

"I came to find him, and I found him here, for this was his ranch, his stronghold, and, when I got here, he was desperately wounded, having been in a battle with Colonel Monette's soldiers."

"I took him in hand, to bring him back to health, for I did not find his daughter with him, nor could I learn where he had taken her."

"For nearly a year have I cared for that man, taking charge of his ranch, for I sent for Texas cattlemen I knew—the five now with me—and never did my patient regain his reason, and three days ago only he died, and the fate of his daughter I do not know."

"But, friendly with the Indians, I have tried to keep them at peace with the whites, though in vain; but I have kept Mexican marauders from joining them, and now and then have done a good turn for my people."

"You have found me, Buffalo Bill, but it is my intention to continue my search for the woman I love."

"I can help you."

"You? You can help me, Buffalo Bill?" cried the doctor, breaking through his calm.

"Yes, for I recognized her from her photograph, and your portrait of her in your quarters here. She is at Fort Totten, where I just came from, and she is teaching school there, and known as Miss Creola Valiente—"

"Her name, and—— but can there be no mistake, Buffalo Bill?"

"None, for I called upon her, spoke of you, and she has your photograph, and I told her I was coming after you."

"And what did she say?"

"Bring him to me, if he is willing to still love the daughter of one who became an outlaw."

"I will carry my dispatches on to Fort Dare, doctor, and then return here for you."

"And I will be ready, but be sure and report to Colonel Monette that the Mexican outlaw chief, El Roma, is dead, and that I will do all in my power to get Gold Face to make peace with the whites."

The next day Buffalo Bill started for Fort Dare, arriving there safely, and, after a long talk with Colonel Monette, he left on his return for the Lone Ranch, where he found Dr. Adrian Valdón ready to accompany him to Fort Totten.

Leaving Rio Ralph in charge of the ranch, the White Medicine Chief and Buffalo Bill took the trail for Fort Totten, and the meeting of the American and his Mexican lady love, after years of separation, made glad their hearts.

A week after their arrival there was a marriage at Fort Totten, and, after seeing the doctor and his bride start by coach for the Texan's old home, Buffalo Bill took the trail to return to General Carr, who heard the whole story, and said:

"Well, Cody, you have done nobly—in fact, far more than I cut out for you, for you found the doctor, and his wife, also."

TO BE CONTINUED.

PRIZE ANECDOTE DEPARTMENT.

Boys, look on page 31 and see the announcement of the new contest. We propose to make this contest the most successful and far-reaching ever conducted. It rests with you to do it, but we know that you can, because the first contest along the same lines was a tremendous success.

Here are some of the best articles received this week:

Saved By a Dog.

(By Harold Schmurstine, Buffalo, N. Y.)

I am a reader of the Buffalo Bill stories, and have seen your prize offer, so I herewith write you one of my adventures in a burning building.

One night about five years ago I was awakened by my faithful dog Rover barking and pulling on my bedclothes. On looking at him I saw that his hair was singed by fire, so I jumped out of bed and ran into the next room to see what the cause of it was. The kitchen was in flames. I was on the second floor and had to go through the kitchen to get to the stairs, so I did not know how to get out of the building. I woke my parents, and then thought of jumping out of the window. I ran to the window, raised the sash and jumped, the dog jumping after me. I then ran and got a ladder from the shed to help my parents from the burning building. They got out safely and I then ran and put in an alarm for the fire department. The dog had saved my life.

Caught in the Snow.

(By Edward Muller, Washington.)

As I am a constant reader of your Buffalo Bill Stories, I naturally take a very great interest in your Anecdote Prize Contest. Here is my story:

Every morning, as I carried the morning papers, I had to rise at 5 a. m., but on this particular morning which I am now going to describe, I was delayed until 7 o'clock on account of a severe blizzard which had come upon us during the night.

As usual I went to the depot to get the papers. The wind being very strong, it drifted the snow four or five feet high. I was delayed over an hour in getting there. I had delivered all but six papers when the cold overtook me and I sank in the snow twice, but managed to rise and try again. But being very weak and the wind strong and cold, I was drifted against a fence and became unconscious. When I came to I found myself in a drug store surrounded by many people. My parents, meantime, became worried and telephoned as to my safety without any result. They were overjoyed when a cab drove up to the door and I was taken into the house, where a cheerful fire was burning on the hearth. Dr. Sibley, meantime, was at the house, and I not having recovered from the shock he prescribed a medicine which relieved me. The next day I was much better, but mother would not let me carry any more papers.

Our Camping Tour.

(By John Schneider, Buffalo, N. Y.)

Last summer I suggested to my friends that we go on a camping tour. They all said it was a good idea, so we got five other friends and myself together. We started out to camp at a small town named Grand Rapids, where there was a large creek.

The next morning, after eating something, we said we would draw straws to see which two would go shooting birds. Myself and my friend Harold were the two to go. We were not to go further than three miles. We had got about twenty birds together when we spied an orchard. We went over there to get some apples, and were just going to leave when we heard the report of a gun and buckshot started to fly around us like

hail. We got behind a tree to get out of the way when a large dog came and grabbed me by the pants. My friend, who had a revolver, pulled it out and shot the dog dead just as the farmer came up and told us to get out of his orchard.

We told him we only wanted a few apples. He then saw his dead dog and said that we must pay for him, but we told him to keep his dogs out of our way or we would kill all of them. He told us if we didn't get out of his land he would fill us with buckshot. We got out of his way before he had time to do it, and went back to camp and told the boys what happened.

The next day we made a small raft to go out in the creek to go fishing or to dive from when in swimming. That afternoon my friend Harold and myself went fishing. We got out in the middle of the creek and dropped a large stone which we used for an anchor. We had about six or seven fish when I felt that the raft was moving, and looking where the rope was fastened I saw that it was not there, also our guide sticks were gone. So we were as helpless as a bird in a lion's paw. About two hundred feet away was a large dam about eight feet high. The water below was about ten feet deep. All we could do was to think how we could stop the raft in that swift-flowing water, but we were nearing the dam all the while. When we were about twenty-five feet away I realized how near death I was. I said that the instant we struck the dam I was going to jump over. My friend said all right, so the next second we were seen flying in the air and a loud splash told that we struck water. But just as I came to the surface again the raft came over and landed in the water about one foot away from my head. We took in the situation and swam toward shore and ran to camp.

A Miraculous Escape.

(By Lester Auwrick, Schenectady, N. Y.)

The little anecdote I am about to relate has to deal with Colonel W. F. Cody's (Buffalo Bill's) noted horse, Duke, and his escape from what seemed certain death in a collision at the close of the past season of the Wild West show.

'Twas on the night of October 28, and the second section of "Buffalo Bill's Wild West" was being rapidly drawn over the rails of the Southern railway from Charlotte, N. C., to Danville, Va., where we were to make our last stand for the season. At about three o'clock on the morning of the 29th, I was most rudely awakened by being hurled from my bunk to the floor of the sleeper which I occupied.

Thinking, as did the other occupants of the car, that we had left the rails, a rather common occurrence, I hastily drew on my trousers and rushed to the door. Noticing we were still on the track, I next turned my attention to the engine, which was enveloped in a cloud of steam. As I stepped to the ground I was astonished to see our engineer running toward me, with his face blackened and cut, so that he was hardly recognizable. I asked him what the trouble was, and his words were:

"My God! the horses are all killed!" and on he rushed down the track. I hurried toward the engine, and there found we had met a fast freight going in the opposite direction, which had crashed into us, demolishing both engines, one freight car of the freight train, and five carloads of our most valuable horses.

By this time Johnny Baker, accompanied by the cowboys and several of the soldiers, arrived on the scene, where we extricated as many animals as possible. In the meantime Buffalo Bill was searching for his two favorite horses, "Old

Dad," and "Duke," The former was found pinioned beneath a car cut in two as neatly as a person could have done it with a knife.

Of Duke not a trace could we find. The car in which he was confined while traveling was next to the engine and contained besides Duke, the mules, which drew the "Old Overland" stage coach, and the horses of the U. S. cavalrymen.

Several of the latter could be seen buried away the debris, and it was supposed Duke was with the dead animals buried in the wreckage. So, imagine our surprise when, hearing a neigh coming from a cornfield near by, just at daybreak, I found Duke eating among the corn stalks, with not a scratch on him. How he was the only animal to escape from that car is a mystery and probably will always remain so. We lost 110 horses killed outright, and thirty were shot to free them from their sufferings.

Attacked By a Snake.

(By Frank Gibson, Seattle, Wash.)

About two weeks ago, at 3:15 in the morning, I was sitting in the Eastern newsstand, where I work nights, reading a Buffalo Bill Weekly, when I heard a scream and running out on the sidewalk I saw a woman jumping about on the next corner. I ran up there and saw a large snake coiled up and striking at her. Having lived in the city all my life, I do not know much about snakes, so I was pretty much frightened when I saw this one, but picking up a stone I hit the snake with it and broke its back. Then, getting hold of a stick, I hit it over the head a couple of times and killed it. When measured it was five feet four inches long and four inches around the body. I afterwards found out that it was a bull snake, which is not poisonous, and had escaped from a show that was in the city at the time.

My Experience With Wolves.

(By Pliny Thurston, St. Louis, Mo.)

While hunting coon in Arkansas I happened to run across a dog and put him out to hunt with my dog. They soon treed a coon, and as I came up I saw not over one hundred yards away what I thought to be the dogs, but soon learned better, for as quick as they saw me they darted out after me. I was taken by surprise, so I made for a tree, and was pretty near up it when I was jerked to the ground. I quickly got to my feet and started to run and the wolves, for such they were, followed me, but the dogs held them back till I got to a hollow tree. Thanks to reading Buffalo Bill stories, I knew how to handle them then, for I used my gun for all it was worth and not to bad use, either. I did not notice the long cut on my leg until after it was all over. To this day I have a scar on my leg six inches long.

A Struggle for Life.

(By Bert Blake, Topeka, Kan.)

One bright summer morning found me and my pards, Hugh and John, off in a boat bound for our swimming hole. The hole was supposed to be twenty-five feet deep. We swam around a while, when Hugh said:

"Bert, I'll bet you can't touch bottom. I will give you my knife if you do."

"I'll take you up," I said, "and if I don't touch bottom it won't be my fault."

There was a cable that ran across the swimming hole, so if you went down you could catch hold of it. I went to the bank and got a rock weighing about ten pounds and took it out on the cable. Then I took hold of it with both hands and let go.

Down, down I went in the dark water. At last my feet touched something. It was the bottom.

I reached down, got a handful of mud, let go of the rock, and started up.

When about half way up my head hit something. I tried to move to the side, but could not. The next minute I felt my breath leaving me little by little. I began to get scared. A feeling of horror came over me, which I cannot describe.

My God! to die down there!

Then everything became black. The past came back to me and I thought of those at home. My mother and father; I made one last attempt, and felt myself beginning to rise. Then everything became a blank.

When I came to I was lying on the bank and Dr. Huford was standing by my side. Hugh was bending over me. He said: "Bert, you must have had a pipe dream." They got a wagon and took me home. I was all right again in a day or so.

Chased By a Bull.

(By Paul McShane, Webb City.)

As I was returning from work one evening last year, I had two or three miles to go, and I was crossing a field, when I heard something coming behind me on a run. I turned quickly around to see what it was, and just as I turned around, I saw a large ball-faced bull coming at full speed towards me. I was just about fifty yards from an old brush fence. I made for it, and got over and about ten feet away when he came to it. I saw the fence was not going to keep the bull from coming through, and it was about half a mile from me to another fence or a place of safety.

I had been reading the Buffalo Bill stories, and I thought how brave Buffalo Bill was. I thought I would be brave, too. I saw the bull would overtake me in a little while longer, so I turned around to face him. He was coming straight at me with his head down almost to the ground. Just as he was within about three feet of me I jumped to one side, and he went on by and I made for the brush fence again and got behind it before the bull turned around. I crawled in between the brush and lay down and my shirt caught on a twig and I saw then what made the bull chase me. I wore a red shirt.

The bull came back about half way between where he stopped when after me and where I lay, and then, after he had stopped and looked a while and could not see me, he turned slowly and walked away. I lay there till the bull got out of sight, and then I got out of the brush fence and made for home.

A Narrow Escape from Drowning.

(By Rob Sheppard, Des Moines, Iowa.)

One day in June in a small town in Iowa three boys and myself thought we would go swimming. However, none of us could swim. I did not want to take my dog, who was a pointer. The rest of the boys said:

"Take him, he'll do no harm."

I soon consented, and he trotted along behind us. It was at the time of year when the river was high. We walked down the river bank till we came to a sand bar. Here we went in swimming.

I led and went gradually out to about knee deep. Suddenly I was carried off my feet, and about seven feet down was some still water, where I sank and came up twice, and the second time the dog was at my side. I grabbed his collar and was soon carried to shore. He had saved my life, and I was mighty glad I had brought him.

My Fight With a Burglar.

(By Everett McBride, Pennsylvania.)

It was about three weeks ago that this incident happened. We had moved out of our house to get it repaired. I had been missing articles every evening. So one evening I thought I would catch the boys, as I suspected the thieves to be. I armed myself with a short hickory stick that had a small piece of lead on the end, and hid myself behind a box.

It grew very dark in the room, and I became worried and thought I would go. Just then I heard a footstep in the room below. Then I thought that I would have a great time with the boys, but I was greatly mistaken. I felt very timid at the moment. Some one came walking up the stairs and struck a match to see his way. Just as he did so, I started for him, but instead of my having fun it was his fun. He ordered

me to halt and throw up my hands. I thinking he was going to shoot, was afraid to move.

An idea struck me. If he would shoot and happen to miss, I would give a cry of pain, as though in agony, and fall to the floor, for I knew I was in great danger. Just then I moved. He fired at me, but missing, I did as I said, and fell to the floor. As he saw me falling, he rushed upon me with a dagger. When he came in reach of me I raised myself and gave him a severe blow on the head, which made him drop his dagger, and giving him another blow with my billy, he fell to the floor unconscious. Getting this advantage, I leaped to my feet and in place of three steps, I took one and did not stop until I was almost a quarter of a mile from the house.

I do not think I will ever try to catch another burglar, for when I think of it, I get nervous as though I were very cold.

On the Arkansas River in a Storm.

(By Carl Ware, Arkansas.)

One hot day last June five of us boys went across the river, in a small boat, to take a swim. There was a large sandbar sloping down to the river. We were in a small lagoon joining the river. We were enjoying our swim immensely when three more boys joined us in a heavy boat. They put their boat on the island between the river and lagoon. We had ours on the bar. We were all playing in the water when it began to rain. Then we put our clothes in the end of the boats to keep them dry. It kept raining harder and harder, till we had to keep our head under to keep our ears from getting stung. Then it began to hail and the wind to blow. The waves began to get high and we could not get out without getting big bumps on us where the hail hit us. Then the wind began to blow harder than ever. We tried to put on our clothes, but couldn't, for the hail and rain. We dropped down behind the boat to keep the hail off. Then the wind picked up the boat, and it struck my shoulder. I became entangled in the chain on the boat,

and was carried with the boat to the middle of the river. I could hardly swim for the wind, hail and waves, and felt that I would be strangled, but after a long swim I got to the bank. I jumped up to run and catch up with the other boys, but the wind cut our feet out from under us and we would slide along the sand. The sand got in our eyes and we couldn't see, and the hail hurt us so we couldn't run, and the wind was carrying us straight toward the river. I saw a log and all of us flew for it and that is all that saved us. The water came up, up, up till it got right on us. It was so cold that we all had a chill. Finally the hail slackened up and then we lit out for some trees about a quarter of a mile for shelter.

"It had been a cloudburst. As we reached the trees it was about over. We lost nearly all of our clothes. There were only enough left for one, and he went and got us all clothes. We also lost our boat and came near losing ourselves. I was indeed glad to get back alive.

My Experience in a Runaway.

(By Paul Kyle, West Virginia.)

One day as I was playing on the street I saw a wagon come along loaded with empty barrels going to the flour mill; I thought it a good chance to get a ride, so I hopped on behind. The driver was sitting on the top of a barrel, and on the road to the mill we had to cross the C. and O. railroad track. An engine was shifting some cars about that time, and the horses became frightened and ran away. The driver was thrown off the first thing, and in trying to get off, my foot got caught and I could not get it loose. My head was hanging down, and I thought my time had come, but as the mill was not far and the road only went to the mill, the horses stopped and the men came out and got my foot loose and helped me out. I was so dirty and black you could hardly tell if I was a white boy. That experience taught me a lesson about jumping on wagons.

BOYHOODS OF FAMOUS MEN.

This department contains each week the story of the early career of some celebrated American. Watch for these stories and read them, boys. They are of the most fascinating interest.

Those already published are: No. 1—Buffalo Bill; No. 2—Kit Carson; No. 3—Texas Jack; No. 4—Col. Daniel Boone; Nos. 5 and 6—David Crockett; No. 7—General Sam Houston; Nos. 8 and 9—Lewis Wetzel; Nos. 10 and 11—Capt. John Smith; No. 12—Wild Bill; No. 13—Dr. Frank Powell, the Surgeon Scout; No. 14—Buckskin Sam; No. 15—Seneca Adams ("Old Grizzly" Adams).

No. 16—PONY BOB.

(BOB HASLAM.)

THE PONY EXPRESS RIDER.

By A PARD OF THE PLAINS.

Short of stature, with a well-knit frame, quick in movement, and strong as a mountain lion, Robert Haslam was cut out for the hard life in which he made fame as a Pony Express Rider.

From earliest boyhood he was a rider, and so fond was he of horses that he was perfectly content if he was allowed to have an old family horse as his nurse, for he kept quiet all day while holding the old animal out to feed.

It was always felt by those who knew him best in boyhood that Bob would distinguish himself in some way, and the

chance came when his family moved out to Utah before the boy had entered upon his teens.

Bob was sent to the country school, a couple of miles distant from his home, and in a very wild neighborhood, for semi-hostile redskins and a wild element of whites were often given to mischief.

The boy had his pony, and rode to school in pleasant weather, but when snow began to fly there was no place to keep his horse, and he had to tramp it to and fro.

One night in the absence of his father and the rest of the

family from home, for they had gone to attend to a distant funeral, Bob was left alone, he stoutly asserting that he was not afraid, that he would milk the cows, feed the chickens and take good care of the place. And Bob kept his word, as will be seen.

That night he had two visitors, and though he did not like their looks he took them in for the night, prepared a good supper and then decided to watch them.

He did not go to his little room to sleep, but to one off the sitting-room, and he sneaked his rifle and father's revolver in with him and got into bed with his clothes on and his weapons for company, greatly impressed with his importance.

Bob knew that his father had several thousand dollars in gold coin in the house in his desk, where also was kept his mother's jewelry, and though the men might be honest travelers they did not look it, as his young eyes read human nature.

Bob intended to lay awake all night, only he just couldn't do it, and he was awakened from a sound sleep by a crash.

He got up, opened a rear door and peeped into the sitting-room through the window.

He saw what the crash had been, for the men were there and had smashed open his father's desk.

Back to his room ran Bob, got his rifle and throwing open the door of the sitting-room called out, in very decided tones:

"Quit that right now, and git!"

One of the men laughed, while the other sent a bullet whizzing by Bob's head.

Bob returned the fire with a promptness and true aim that showed nerve.

Down dropped the man as the other, who was still working at the desk, ran toward the boy, knife in hand, calling out:

"I've got ter slit yer throat, young feller."

Bob did not run, nor lose his grip, but again brought his rifle up to a level and called out:

"Hands up, or I'll shoot!"

The man made a spring, and Bob pulled trigger.

Down went the fellow in a heap, rolling in agony, and yet, drawing a revolver he fired several times at the boy, but with uncertain aim, and the weapon fell from his hand.

Bob still kept his nerve, got a pillow for the wounded man, and did all that he could to help him.

"You have done for my pard, boy, and I've got my finish, too; but you did only your duty.

"We knew the old man kept big money here, and we wanted it, and— Shake hands, my boy, for I'm going fast!"

Bob feared a trick, and shook hands, but with his father's revolver ready.

An hour after the man died, and it was a long, terrible vigil for the poor boy.

Then he had a good cry, after which he put the two bodies side by side and covered them over with a sheet. But this looked too ghastly and ghostly, and he covered them with a comfort, and sat down to read.

Thus the night passed, and when morning came Bob fed the chickens, the horses, milked the cows and went in to get his breakfast.

But he did not go into the room where the two bodies lay.

Yet he had kept his word, and taken good care of the house, and he was a happy boy when his people returned and discovered how near to death he had been.

That made Bob a young hero in the neighborhood, and at

the country school he was the idol of the children, but bore his honors modestly.

Another deadly encounter that Bob had as a mere boy went far to show his wonderful nerve, and that he was the very kind of stuff out of which heroes are made.

Not far off the trail that the boy traveled from his house to the school there was a deserted house going to ruin, which had once been the dwelling place of a well-to-do settler.

One night the settler and his family had all been murdered there, the house robbed and two of the robbers had been found dead with the inmates, showing that a hard fight had been made.

This gave the place a bad name, and it was called the "Haunted Cabin," and no one seemed to have any call to go there.

Returning home from school one afternoon late, Bob and a pard saw a terrible storm coming up, and he said:

"Come, we'll go to the Haunted Cabin for shelter."

"If you, who had had reason, aren't afraid of dead folks, Bob, I hain't," was Brick Dolan's reply, and the two started for the cabin, the door was unlocked and they entered.

Glancing from the window at the coming storm, Bob gave a cry, and said:

"Look yonder, Brick! They are some of that tough band of Night Hawks, and they are coming here."

Brick saw four horsemen, coming at a gallop toward the cabin and said:

"I know them—let's hide."

Bob agreed, and they climbed to the loft and closed the trap, just as the men entered, bringing their saddles, while the storm came on with fury.

The two boys were lying upon the floor, as silent as mice, their eyes at knotholes in the flooring, and they beheld four of the worst men known in that part of the country.

They were men suspected of horse-thieving, cattle-stealing and robbing cabins, in several cases having taken life, but they belonged to a gang that it was dangerous to attack.

"Pards, I hain't been in this ranch since the night we wiped out ther Foster fambley, an' I'd not care ter stay all night, I kin tell yer that," said one.

A fire was kindled, food taken from haversacks, and while the storm raged the men ate and talked.

What the boys heard was a plot to rob a house that night, and Bob whispered:

"Brick, you see that shutter at the end of the roof?"

"Yes, Bob."

"Creep there, slip out and drop down on the ground, for never mind a ducking now.

"Get one of the horses of these men, and ride for it, telling the men at Borden's ranch to come here quick, and ready for a fight."

"And you, Bob?" asked Brick, who was not anxious to make a hero of himself so suddenly.

"I'll stay here, and as I've got my revolver, maybe I can hold them."

"Maybe you better go, Bob."

"If you will hold them I will."

"I'll go, Bob," and Brick slipped to the window, the creaking of the cabin under the hard wind, and the pouring of the rain destroying any sound he made.

Brick got out safely, and Bob waited half an hour, an hour and no one came.

The rain ceased, and at last as night was near at hand, the men started to go, when in a hoarse voice Bob called out:

"Hands up, quick, for we've got you all covered!"

Three of the gang obeyed, the fourth drew a revolver, and aiming through the large knothole Bob fired.

The bullet pierced the man's heart, and the three men sung out:

"Don't shoot, pards! hands is up."

"One move and I will kill you!" called out Bob in the same sepulchral tones.

Thus he held them for five minutes, refusing to answer their questions, and feeling, if help did not come soon he would have a lot of elephants on his hands he would like to get rid of, for night was coming on, and the fire dying out, so darkness would aid them.

But help soon came, the door was thrown open and a crowd of men rushed in and the outlaws were quick to try and break away and a hot fight followed.

But the outlaws were shot down and Bob and Brick were given full credit for their carrying off and thus saving a ranchman from being robbed that night, perhaps from being killed, while again it became "Hero Bob," for the bold part he played in the deadly game in the Haunted Cabin.

With such scenes to try his nerve, a splendid rider, dead shot, and of wonderful endurance it was not to be wondered at that Robert Haslam was readily taken as a rider when the Pony Express was put on the Overland Trail.

He was then under the medium height, though eighteen years of age, and his reputation for nerve was known.

Bob had shot for a prize at one of the frontier camps against the crack marksmen of the country of dead shots, and he had won without a miss, while in a riding contest he had won the generous purse offered to the victor.

He had been a wild-horse hunter in the Southwest, had fought Indians, and was just the youth to be a Pony Rider, where physical endurance, utter fearlessness and presence of mind were required to a wonderful degree.

So Robert Haslam was put to work as Pony Express Rider, and the nickname bestowed upon him was "Pony Bob," by which he is still known, and it was given to him by Buffalo Bill, who was at the same time a Pony Rider, and a remarkable one on the same trail from Red Buttes on the North Platte to Three Crossings on the Sweet Water, a distance of seventy-six miles.

It was a long trail and a hard one, to be made at full speed and with seven changes of horses at the relay stations; but Pony Bob did not weaken, and soon made his name famous as a rider.

Several times he took the turn of other riders, killed or wounded, and did double duty, and had a hot ride for life before he had been a week on the trail, being chased by a large band of Indians, allowing the chief, who was far better mounted than his braves, to come up with him, and killing him in a duel with revolver against bow and arrow, though he received two wounds.

Capturing the chief's fine horse, weapons and war bonnet, for his own horse was killed with an arrow, Pony Bob threw his own saddle on the animal, and got away as the leading braves dashed up, though again wounded.

It was a very daring, neat and clever piece of work, and Pony Bob got full credit, and a medal from the Pony Express Company for saving the pouches with big odds against him.

Several times Pony Bob was attacked by road-agents, with which the pony and stage trails were infested, and though once seriously wounded, killed two men and clung to his saddle and kept on to the end of his run.

Another time he was fired on from ambush, and yet held on, though finding that he was too badly hurt to continue, he halted, tied the saddle pouches firmly to the saddle and sent his horse on, while he lay where he had fallen.

It was within a few miles of the end of his run, and his pony coming in, with the saddle pouches, but the saddle and horse stained with blood, men mounted quickly and started out in search of the daring rider.

He was found, taken to camp, and it was long weeks before he was again able to ride Pony Express; but the company paid his wages in full and gave him what was known to the riders as the "Daredevil Medal," and which Pony Bob fully appreciated.

On another occasion coming upon the Overland Stage Coach held up by a couple of outlaws upon the trail, the driver having been killed, Pony Bob shot one dead, rode over the other, knocking him senseless, and tying him, threw him into the coach with the frightened passengers, and mounting the box drove on to the end of the run.

Anxious to get in on as near time as possible, he set the six-horse team flying, and kept the passengers in a fright until he drew rein at the end of his run. But he was warmly thanked by the passengers for his splendid rescue of them, and one of them, a man of wealth, after returning to San Francisco sent him a thousand dollars, ending his letter with: "I may risk the road-agents again, Pony Bob, upon the same trail, but never ride in a coach again with you on the box, when you are pressed for time."

"Reckless Rob" was another name won by Robert Haslam, after an adventure he had with Indians one day.

There had been a disease among the stage and express horses that carried off a number of them, and made it hard to find teams and good mounts, so, as he was returning one day from an extra run Pony Bob saw from a hill a herd of a couple of hundred horses being driven by a score of Indians.

They had evidently been captured from the Pawnees, for Sioux braves were driving them, and were a good lot of animals.

Pony Bob was a fine mimic, and also a ventriloquist, while he could imitate the notes of a bugle perfectly and knew all the calls, and he made a bold bluff to capture that herd of horses.

Waiting until they came into a canyon, through which a trail led up into the hills, Pony Bob first fired his revolver, killing the chief at long range, and who was leading the herd, the others, save two braves also ahead, bringing up the rear.

Then Pony Bob called a loud command, and an answering one from another locality apparently, followed by a bugle call here, a bugle call there, and it seemed as though the hills ahead were full of soldiers.

The two braves had started at the fall of their chief, and a second one was wounded by Pony Bob in his flight.

That was enough for the Indians in the rear turned in a mad stampede, thinking no more of the horses, and wild yells, shots, bugle calls all followed, though made by one man.

Then Pony Bob dashed down the canyon, set the horses going, skirted the foothills and drove them into Julesburg with a yell of triumph.

Selecting a couple of the best for himself he turned the rest over to the agent of the company, which, however, learning how boldly Pony Bob had captured them, paid him liberally for the lot.

Pony Bob was one of the Pony Riders who made the remarkable ride bearing the dispatches announcing Mr. Lincoln's second inauguration as President, and the time taken for the Pony Riders' run was incredibly short.

After years spent in his exciting life, and with a fair fortune to live on, Pony Bob went to Chicago, where he now resides, few persons knowing the remarkable career of the little man they meet in the daily walks of life.

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